UNIVERSITY OF
Toronto Quarterly

VOLUME XXIV, 1954–5

Editorial Committee

J. R. MacGillivray (*Chairman*)

A. Brady T. A. Goudge H. S. Wilson

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO PRESS

X
Per
U58T
v.24
1954/55

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Vol. XXIV, 1954–5

No. 1, October, 1954

Poetic Wave and Poetic Particle — William Blissett 1
Poe's "Ligeia" and the English Romantics — Clark Griffith 8
How Progressive are the "Progressives"? — Alex S. Mowat 26
Matthew Arnold Visits Chicago — John P. Long 34
The Most Audacious Novel — A. E. Carter 46
The Three Worlds of *The Cocktail Party*: The Wit of T. S. Eliot — Robert A. Colby 56
Ireland and the Twelfth-Century Renaissance — Charles W. Dunn 70

Reviews

The Historian as Prophet — Frank H. Underhill 87
Content with the Form — Northrop Frye 92
The Problems of Education — A. W. Trueman 97
Marlowe and Shakespeare — H. S. Wilson 102
Defending Plato — F. E. Sparshott 106
The Poetic Process — Millar MacLure 107

No. 2, January, 1955

Shakespeare and the Lonely Dragon — Millar MacLure 109
Theme and Technique in the *Philoctetes* and *Oedipus* of André Gide — D. J. Conacher 121
Milton's Hell Revisited — Ernest Schanzer 136
A Philosophy Ancient and Modern — M. M. Kirkwood 146
Work and Leisure — Karl F. Helleiner 156
Revision of the United Nations Charter — Douglas G. Anglin 162
Music and Morality in Thomas Mann and Hermann Hesse — G. W. Field 175
Featherpate of Folly — G. C. Haddow 191

Reviews

Willa Cather and her Work — Philip Child 197
Psychology and Alchemy — Peter F. Fisher 202
New Life for Logic — David Savan 205
Forster's India — Hugh N. Maclean 208
Dialogues of Whitehead — A. H. Johnson 210
In Medias Res — William Blissett 212
More of Berkeley — R. F. McRae 215

No. 3, April, 1955

Bertrand Russell: The Pilgrimage of Scientific Philosophy — Lewis S. Feuer 217
The Moon and the Fairies in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* — Ernest Schanzer 234

LETTERS IN CANADA:

1954 Edited by A. S. P. Woodhouse

Poetry — Northrop Frye 247
Fiction — Claude T. Bissell 257
Remaining Material — J. M. S. Careless, A. Brady, and Others 267
Publications in French — W. E. Collin 306
Publications in Other Languages — Watson Kirkconnell 334

No. 4, July, 1955

Literature and the Literary Judgment — Dorothy Walsh 341
Marlow's Quest — Jerome Thale 351
The Storm Scene in *Paradise Regained*: A Reinterpretation — Dick Taylor, Jr. 359
Samson's Middle: Aristotle and Dr. Johnson — M. E. Grenander 377
British Labour and the Royal Commission on Trade Unions, 1867–9 — H. W. McCready 390
The Meaning and Structure of *Pippa Passes* — Margaret Eleanor Glen 410

Reviews

Brett's *History of Psychology* Revised — C. R. Myers 427
Sixteenth-Century English Literature — H. S. Wilson 429
Broad Minded Philosophy — T. A. Goudge 433
Dylan Thomas Paraphrased — Millar MacLure 435
Realms of Value — Douglas P. Dryer 438
Shorter Notices 439

Ser

UNIVERSITY OF
Toronto Quarterly

Duke University Library
NOV 2 1954
Durham, N. C.

Poetic Wave and Poetic Particle	William Blissett
Poe's "Ligeia" and the English Romantics	Clark Griffith
How Progressive are the "Progressives"?	Alex S. Mowat
Matthew Arnold Visits Chicago	John P. Long
The Most Audacious Novel	A. E. Carter
The Three Worlds of *The Cocktail Party*	Robert A. Colby
Ireland and the Twelfth-Century Renaissance	Charles W. Dunn

REVIEWS

The Historian as Prophet	Frank H. Underhill
Content with the Form	Northrop Frye
The Problems of Education	A. W. Trueman
Marlowe and Shakespeare	H. S. Wilson
Defending Plato	F. E. Sparshott
The Poetic Process	Millar MacLure

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO PRESS
OCTOBER, 1954

How bright is your tomorrow?

No one can tell how things will go with you next year . . . next month . . . or even tomorrow.

But you can take a lot of the worry out of "tomorrow" by talking to the Canada Life representative.

A Canadian company, with over a century of experience, the Canada Life can give you practical, down-to-earth advice. Advice that will help you meet future uncertainties and make tomorrow bright.

The CANADA LIFE
Assurance Company
HEAD OFFICE - TORONTO

C

A.

PR

JE

TH

B.

PU

FII

$4

Ed
U
ad
ro
O

University of Toronto Quarterly

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

A. BRADY T. A. GOUDGE H. S. WILSON

J. R. MACGILLIVRAY (CHAIRMAN)

HONORARY ADVISORY BOARD

PROFESSOR A. S. P. WOODHOUSE (CHAIRMAN), PRINCIPAL F. C. A. JEANNERET, PRESIDENT A. B. B. MOORE, THE REV. PROVOST SEELEY, THE REV. L. K. SHOOK, PROFESSORS F. H. ANDERSON, A. E. BARKER, B. FAIRLEY, R. FLENLEY, R. S. KNOX, THE REV. E. J. MCCORKELL, K. MACLEAN

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO PRESS ON THE FIFTEENTH OF OCTOBER, JANUARY, APRIL, AND JULY. SUBSCRIPTIONS: $4.00 A YEAR.

Editorial communications should be addressed to the Editors, c/o The University of Toronto Press. All inquiries regarding subscriptions and advertising should be addressed to the Director, The University of Toronto Press. Authorized as second-class matter, Post Office Department, Ottawa, Canada.

Top-Ranking Canadian Books

THE PRESENT STATE OF HUDSON'S BAY

By Edward Umfreville; edited by W. Stewart Wallace. No. 5, The Canadian Historical Studies. This is one of the rarest documents relating to the history of the fur trade in British North America, reprinted for the first time since its publication in 1790. $10.00

SON OF THE NORTH

By Charles Camsell. An autobiography of the first importance. Dr. Camsell, now retired, was Deputy Minister of Mines and Resources and Commissioner of the North West Territories. Illustrated. $5.00

A SORT OF ECSTASY

By A. J. M. Smith. The author's first book of poems since *News of The Phoenix* was published 1943. Contains thirty-six poems of which twenty-three are new. Probable price $3.50

EVENTS AND SIGNALS

By F. R. Scott. The second volume of Dr. Scott's verse, his first, *Overture*, having appeared in 1945. Dr. Scott has been associated with A. J. M. Smith, A. M. Klein and Leo Kennedy. $2.50

LEMOYNE D'IBERVILLE
Soldier of New France

By Nellis M. Crouse. Definitive biography of a great soldier sea captain, colonist and statesman who extended the French empire in North America. An important historical volume. $5.00

THIS MOST FAMOUS STREAM

By Arthur R. M. Lower. A fresh and stimulating approach to the proposition that the liberal-democratic way of life rests on man's faith in his ability to control his own destiny under conditions of freedom. $3.50

OUR SENSE OF IDENTITY

Edited by Malcolm Ross. A book of Canadian essays. "I don't quite see how he pulled it off; there must have been some uncanny selective antennae at work." Arthur Phelps on *Critically Speaking*. C.B.C. $5.00

EACH AGE IS A DREAM

By L. H. Garstin. A study of ideologies. "This little book looks at first glance much less explosive than it really is."—*The Telegram*, Toronto. $2.75

PLAYS OF THE YEAR
Volume IX

Edited by J. C. Trewin. The ninth volume in the series of successful plays of the Year in English theatres, many of which move on to New York and the films. $3.75

The Ryerson Press

CONTENTS

VOL. XXIV OCTOBER, 1954 No. 1

Poetic Wave and Poetic Particle — WILLIAM BLISSETT 1

Poe's "Ligeia" and the English Romantics — CLARK GRIFFITH 8

How Progressive are the "Progressives"? — ALEX S. MOWAT 26

Matthew Arnold Visits Chicago — JOHN P. LONG 34

The Most Audacious Novel — A. E. CARTER 46

The Three Worlds of *The Cocktail Party*: The Wit of T. S. Eliot — ROBERT A. COLBY 56

Ireland and the Twelfth-Century Renaissance — CHARLES W. DUNN 70

REVIEWS

The Historian as Prophet — FRANK H. UNDERHILL 87

Content with the Form — NORTHROP FRYE 92

The Problems of Education — A. W. TRUEMAN 97

Marlowe and Shakespeare — H. S. WILSON 102

Defending Plato — F. E. SPARSHOTT 106

The Poetic Process — MILLAR MACLURE 107

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

William Blissett, Associate Professor of English in the University of Saskatchewan, is the editor of the late Reid MacCallum's *Imitation and Design* (1953).

A. E. Carter, formerly Assistant Professor of French in the University of Manitoba, is at present engaged in research in Europe as the holder of a Royal Society of Canada fellowship.

Robert A. Colby is Librarian for Language, Literature, and Arts in Queen's College, Flushing, N.Y.

Charles W. Dunn, Assistant Professor of English in University College, is at present studying in Europe as the holder of a Nuffield fellowship.

Northrop Frye, Chairman of the Department of English, Victoria College, was a visiting professor at Princeton during the past academic term. He is the author of *Fearful Symmetry* and numerous other critical studies.

Clark Griffith is an Instructor in English at Harvard University.

John P. Long, of Chicago, has the distinction, in this issue, of being non-academic.

Millar MacLure is Assistant Professor of English in Victoria College.

Alex S. Mowat is Professor of Education in Dalhousie University.

F. E. Sparshott is Lecturer in Philosophy in the University.

A. W. Trueman, formerly President of the University of New Brunswick, is now Government Film Commissioner and Chairman, the National Film Board, Ottawa.

F. H. Underhill, Professor of History in the University, will be familiar to many readers as a distinguished commentator for the C.B.C.

POETIC WAVE AND POETIC PARTICLE

WILLIAM BLISSETT

LITERARY criticism has long borrowed its terms from other fields of inquiry: however sure its practitioners have been of their particular judgments, they have in more general matters usually been more sure of something else—of the truths of theology or of the sciences and social sciences. This is now most apparent when political and psychological vocabulary and values are applied in literary judgment, when works of literature are approached, explained, and all too often dismissed in terms of psychoanalysis of their author or a calculation of their probable impact on society. But even when an attempt is made to see the object as in itself it really is, the critics of poetry have employed as if unnoticed terms, concepts, images belonging to a most unlikely science, physics.

Unlikely—until we reflect on the prestige of the physical sciences in the modern world. For a poem is in some sense a "thing," and it is only to be expected that anyone trying to say what a poem is should be influenced by his assumptions about what "things" are. And in our age of analysis such a question entails saying what they are made of. Even a class of students fresh from reading *Huckleberry Finn*, in which the Father of Waters is one of the chief characters, if asked what water *really is*, will chorus "H_2O." If such a fate can befall so tangible, so symbolically rich a substance as water, the neutral word "thing" will be reduced to atoms even sooner.

Reduced to atoms. But is it quite as simple as that? The crisis of physics, in so far as it can be conveyed in non-technical language and grasped by the layman, arose out of a widening dichotomy between Newtonian corpuscular physics on the one hand, in which everything from the universe as a whole down to the single atom of matter or corpuscle of light was conceived as body in space, and the wave mechanics associated with Huygens and Clerk Maxwell, whereby body in space dissolved into energy in continuum, particle into wave. The two theories are not rivals in the sense that one is true, the other false, or in the sense that one can be reduced to the other. Rather, if we wish to speak of position, we must use the language of particles, if of velocity, that of waves. Fortunately, the analogy we are to uncover requires on its physical side only statement, not explanation.

If the ultimate units of matter and energy are the atom and the wave, what is the unit of that other "thing," poetry? The individual ink-mark on paper will not do, and neither will the single sound in

Vol. XXIV, no. 1, Oct., 1954

the throat: nor, I think we must agree, will it solve anything to say that the whole poem makes a totality which is indivisible: that is simply paralysingly true, like saying that the universe is one. To get an answer analogous to "atoms" and "waves," we must find poems to be bodies made up of smaller unitary bodies; we must find them to be centres of force, wave-processes. These very answers present themselves now as they have in the past: "images," "lines."

An image involves two or more things in a sort of "space": the two things compared and the fact of their not being identical. Thus a metaphor (to take the standard, typical image) may be said to have position. Some metaphors are complex and in a sense "dynamic"; these are like a solar system or a complex molecule but are still corpuscular. Many, perhaps most words are metaphorical in origin and nature, but in spite of Mallarmé's dictum that poems are not written in ideas but in words, the metaphor is the better unit than the word, just as the atom is still in spite of fission the better unit of matter than any of its component parts because it can still be talked about as having position, being tangible.

A line is on its way somewhere at a certain rate: the eye or tongue must travel from the beginning of the line to the end. Whereas in the recognition of a metaphor time is irrelevant, the line involves time as necessarily as the metaphor involves space. Every line has velocity. Some groups of lines form stanzas which give the impression of being static, but these are like regular patterns of waves and are not corpuscular. Every word, having a sound, partakes of rhythm, but the line is a better unit than the single word, just as the whole wave is a better unit than any arc or flow or eddy within it.

Figures of sound or words (*figurae verborum*) adhere to the line; figures of sense or meaning (*figurae sententiae*) comprise the imagery.

Readers and critics can recognize a poet's sense of the line even if they cannot always describe it. Some are led astray by the rhetorical terminology just used or by some less precisely defined modern statement of it. Line-criticism is vitiated by too much concern for sound, not enough for movement. Take a simple but superbly successful poem:

> Pat a cake, pat a cake, baker's man,
> Bake me a cake as fast as you can,
> Pat it, and prick it, and mark it with B,
> Put it in the oven for baby and me.

The poem is certainly rich in patterns of sound—could hardly be richer: it is an arrangement in PK and BM with appropriate vowel recurrences, and that certainly gives it some of the memorability which is essential to line-integrity. But there is something else quite equally important to be said. The line is the unit of sound, true, but also of movement. It has duration and hence resembles and can imitate events and operations. Take another poem by an equally talented poet:

> Pussy cat, pussy cat, where have you been?
> I've been to London to see the Queen.
> Pussy cat, pussy cat, what did you there?
> I frightened a little mouse under her chair.

Now the lines in these two poems are similarly arranged, and both depend for their different effects partly on the repetition of sound; but those effects are different because the movement in each fits a certain operation. In the first, the driving rhythm, with variation in pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in each line, and, more significantly, an acceleration at the end of each line, reflects the movement of a wide-awake child playing some boisterous clapping game or making mud pies and getting the hang of it with a burst of speed and delight at the end of the line. In the second, the sleepy rhythm accurately reflects the operation of a sleepy child stroking the sleepy cat, the two of them being just enough awake to give a sign at the word "mouse."

The power of the sound of the word alone to convey meaning is strictly limited, and much nonsense has been written on the subject. If the word "eagle" sounds aquiline to us, we should remember that it sounds like a hedgehog in German. The expressive power of movement is, I believe, greater. A line is capable by sound and movement combined of imitating events, and while it begins with the events nearest home—the pulse, the breath, the movements of muscles—it reaches out for more complex rhythms, the flow of feeling and the balance of dialectic. It aspires to the condition of music (whatever music is). A sensitive, a distinctive, a powerful rhythm, expressive of the action involved: that takes us to the vortex of the poetic process. And when certain lines come to haunt us, it is this quality, quite as much as the imagery, that we respond to, as the following examples may serve to show:

> Sweet Thames, run softly till I end my song.
>
> But at my back I always hear
> Time's winged chariot hurrying near.
>
> The spider's touch, how exquisitely fine!
> Feels at each thread, and lives along the line.
>
> Motionless as a cloud the old man stood
> That heareth not the loud winds when they call
> And moveth all together, if it move at all.
>
> The menace and caress of wave that breaks on water.

I quote these at the risk of labouring the obvious, mainly because of their beauty but partly also because we do not often realize how little sense of the line survives in the average intelligent person. I marked a set of examinations (not of my own students) in which long speeches from *Macbeth* were quoted, correctly, but as prose. Nor can the atrophied sense be brought back to life in short order, for one student (my own, this time, and I am afraid, with the intention of pleasing me) spoke of *Macbeth* as being replete with powerful and beautiful lines, for instance "Macbeth, Macbeth, Macbeth, beware Macduff, beware the Thane of Fife, dismiss me, enough."

But Aristotle found the heart of poetry in metaphor: "The greatest thing by far is to have a command of metaphor. This alone cannot be imparted by another; it is the mark of genius." The creation of metaphor is more mysterious than mere imitation: it makes something out of nothing (the only thing that could be mysterious for Aristotle). Other critics make the same high claims. Sidney, for instance, asserts that "it is not rhyming and versing that maketh a poet . . . but it is that feigning notable image of virtues, vices or what else. . . ." Dryden states with quiet conviction: "Imaging is, in itself, the very height and life of Poetry"; and Mr. Ezra Pound with characteristic emphasis: "It is better to present one Image in a lifetime than to produce voluminous works." And finally Sir Herbert Read: "I think we should always be prepared to judge a poet . . . by the force and originality of his metaphors."[1]

In considering the line we had to be on guard against an over-emphasis on mere sound (the so-called "music of poetry") and to direct our critical attention to the fusion of sound and movement which enables the line (and combinations of lines: the possibilities of variation are countless) to imitate all sorts of events. Now that we come to the image, we have to be on guard against an over-emphasis on the pictorial (a temptation inherent in the word "image," not to mention the Horatian *ut pictura poesis*). Here the old rhetorical phrase *figurae sententiae* comes to the rescue, for it may be rendered "figures of sense," and the word "sense" has just the ambiguity we want: at one pole it joins the senses, at the other the rational sense or meaning. An image, then, does not just "paint a picture": it makes sense of the sensible world. In the line sound and movement are one; in the image thought and feeling are one.

The image-maker calls a new thing into being; the critic's job is to take its bearings, to find its position. It is a miracle that a metaphor should exist at all, but once it is there, it is possible to place it, as it were, spatially, to "justify" it. The normal forms of metaphor are declarative (this is to this as that is to that) or exploratory (this is to this as that is to what?); in either case a quadrilateral, a set of co-ordinates is implied. A reflection is to an echo as sight is to hearing: all four points are known. That metaphor is declarative—now, though as the late Professor H. R. MacCallum pointed out in his article on "Leonardo and the Method of Analogy,"[2] this was not always so but must have come to some one once as a great discovery. When we say that light is echoed or sound is reflected, we are stating at once a dead metaphor and a permanent truth.

---

[1] These passages and the later one from Coleridge are quoted from C. Day Lewis, *The Poetic Image* (1947), chap. I.

A poet is sensitive to declarative metaphor (that is, to language), but the power of making metaphor which the great poets have possessed and the critics have praised is largely exploratory. Their images are new things and challenge justification. For analysis I have chosen Blake's "London" because its images are forceful and original without being attractive or pictorial.

> I wander through each charter'd street
> Near where the charter'd Thames doth flow,
> And mark in every face I meet
> Marks of weakness, marks of woe.
>
> In every cry of every man,
> In every infant's cry of fear,
> In every voice, in every ban,
> The mind-forg'd manacles I hear.
>
> How the chimney sweeper's cry
> Every blackening church appalls,
> While the hapless soldier's sigh
> Runs in blood down palace walls.
>
> But most, through midnight streets I hear
> How the youthful harlot's curse
> Blasts the newborn infant's tear
> And blights with plagues the marriage hearse.

The poem is an exploration of London; the explorer is lost. "I wander through each charter'd street." Streets for buying and selling; streets diagrammatically mapped for commercial purposes; streets straitly constricted for commercial purposes; not only streets but the river which should be free, and the people also. The second stanza takes further bearings in the same area. A cry is a beast's expression; these men have sunk below human words. Again, a man may cry out in a moment of fear, but an infant has no fear to express—except here. "In every voice, in every ban": every voice here is a ban—a commercial proclamation, relating to the first stanza, a proclamation of church or state, relating to the one following, or a curse, relating to the last; and these sounds are sub-human (a cry) or pre-human (an infant's cry) or mechanical (manacles), yet springing from the human power of thought, for it is a "charter'd" street and the manacles are "mind-forg'd." Continuing the infant's cry of fear is the chimney sweeper's cry, now a commercial cry of the street; the church as it blackens with smoke and hardness of heart is "appalled" by this cry—made clean by the work the child advertises, made pale at the child's miserable and short life. A human sound is given the soldier, but it is a sound of defeat: he is a victim in life as in death, sighing and bleeding are one. Church and palace are one with the street, to which the last stanza returns us. Midnight is in time what the bottom of the pit is in space. One last cry is heard then, the "youthful harlot's curse." This the wanderer hears "most": it ties the whole poem together. It is first of all what she utters: she curses her newborn infant for crying (in fear) and from envy calls down plagues on the wedding procession in the chartered street. Her curse is not in word only: the curse that blasts the newborn infant's tear is blindness, and with the plague that caused that blindness she will blight the "marriage hearse." The curse finally is herself, her life, the life of man and infant, soldier and chimney sweeper; the curse is London.

---

[2] *Queen's Quarterly*, XXXIII (1925), 178–88.

Figures of sense or meaning, images, I suggest, need to be thought about and felt in some such way as that. Criticism justifies metaphor as dogma justifies myth. The line is not so justified: rather it is acted: like ritual it is found (or not found) to be efficacious. A child can test a line by acting; the justification of metaphor is a job for maturity. But if the latter seems the more complex and exacting form of criticism, we must be careful to right the balance by recalling that line-criticism is an exercise of what Mr. T. S. Eliot calls " 'the auditory imagination'—the feeling for syllable and rhythm, penetrating far below the conscious levels of thought and feeling, invigorating every word; sinking to the most primitive and forgotten, returning to the origin and bringing something back, seeking the beginning and the end."[3] The line bears much of that "passion and passionate flow of poetry" which Coleridge finds "the moderns" sacrificing to "the glare and glitter of a perpetual, yet broken and heterogeneous imagery, or rather an amphibious something made up, half of image, and half of abstract meaning."

To sum up: just as the things of physics may be spoken of in two vocabularies, as made up of waves or of particles, so poetry as a

[3] *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* (1933).

"thing" subject to analysis has been found to have two analogous units, the line and the image. The line is the unit of sound and movement and is the bearer of *figurae verborum*: it is capable of imitating rhythms, inner and outer, anything with a temporal dimension. The image is the unit of poetic statement, of fused thought and feeling, the means by which the poet makes sense of the sensible world, the bearer of *figurae sententiae*: it brings into instantaneous relationship things in a field and hence has a spatial dimension. The really difficult question rises now: how can image and line both be units of poetry? Perhaps, if the analogy with physics holds, they can't be, but are. Or, to put the question in terms more appropriate to the subject, in better lines and better images than mine—

> O chestnut tree, great rooted blossomer,
> Are you the leaf, the blossom or the bole?
> O body swayed to music, O brightening glance,
> How can we know the dancer from the dance?

POE'S "LIGEIA" AND THE ENGLISH ROMANTICS

Clark Griffith

MORE than any of his major American contemporaries, Edgar Allan Poe shifted facilely and readily from one vein of prose fiction directly into another. There simply were no well-defined stages in Poe's writing, no set periods during which he concentrated exclusively upon some particular aspect of his prose material. Even the early, abortive Folio Club project was designed for a combination of humorous sketches and Gothic tales. And later as Poe's interests broadened to include satire, philosophy, and ratiocinative themes, he proved quite capable of composing, all within the space of a few months, a characteristic horror story, a burlesque, an analytical tale, and a metaphysical dialogue.

Yet it is a curious fact that critical studies of Poe regularly ignore the chronological pattern of his work and emphasize instead its similarities according to type. One can find a dozen worth-while books or essays in which scattered examples of Poe's fiction, individual pieces done ten or fifteen years apart, are lumped together in breathlessly neat categories. But one looks in vain for an interpreter who acknowledges that, however apparently different the actual texts may be, what Poe wrote in a given June was just possibly influenced by—was somehow interrelated with—what he had already written in the preceding May. The results of this overcompartmentalized approach are, I think, lamentable. Not only does study always by type but never by time destroy all sense of the continuity in Poe's writing. Much more seriously, it completely blinds us to whatever possibility there is that his scrambled order of composition, his easy hopping from genre to genre, may sometimes have been shrewdly purposeful—and may sometimes be most astonishingly revealing.

By way then of exploring certain potentialities latent in a chronological rather than typal investigation of Poe, let us begin with a very rapid consideration of "Ligeia" (1838). To casual and critical readers alike, this particular tale has always seemed peculiarly compelling; and we need linger only a moment on its Gothic surface to recognize how it does of course abound in the effects, the devices, the mannerisms which are typically, almost mechanically, Poesque. A characteristically psychotic narrator recounts the story. Swiftly during the opening paragraphs he creates and sustains that atmosphere of indefinite terror, that portentous sense of new horrors to come, both Poe's familiar staples. Furthermore, as he describes his wife, now long

Vol. XXIV, no. 1, Oct., 1954

dead but still a haunting, ever present memory, the narrator simultaneously succeeds in casting the lady Ligeia as one of Poe's bizarre "outer wonders," and in revealing his own mental aberration, so essential for perception of the anomaly.

Either Ligeia possessed no ordinary qualities, or the narrator, deprived of the usual logical faculties, proves totally incapable of naming them. He fails to recall her family, her parental name; groping to remember even the place of their first encounter, he fixes upon nothing more definite than a dim, decaying city near the Rhine. Yet his recollections are contrastingly clear when they have to do with Ligeia's extraordinary, her unworldly, characteristics. We hear vivid accounts of her eyes, remarkable for an indefinable mystery as well as for great beauty. Again the narrator speaks of Ligeia's studies, somehow related to her eyes and of an ambiguously metaphysical nature. He refers to her enormous learning, to the Transcendentalist studies in which they were both immersed. Finally it should be noticed how, despite his mental lapses, he carefully accentuates Ligeia's mystery by identifying her with unfathomable blackness—with dark Germany, with the night, with a shadow, with the strange ebony lustre of her hair and eyes.

There follows a description of Ligeia's death, the transitional step between the narrator's reveries and a symbolic drama which immediately ensues. Almost unaccountably she wasted away, shrieking wild utterances to the last and leaving the narrator distraught—but grieving, oddly enough, less for her physical loveliness than for the loss of her vast erudition. Bereaved and inconsolable, he now quits Germany, wanders to England, takes up residence in a gloomy, isolated abbey. Typically Romantic as the new scene seems to be, however, it is quickly established as a place symbolically different from the mysterious region by the Rhine. Where Germany was dark, England is fair; and as though for added emphasis, this fairness is systematically reintroduced, first in the golden trappings of the narrator's English estate and then in depictions of the fair-haired, blue-eyed Lady Rowena Trevanion of Tremaine, the English heiress who presently becomes his second bride.

Of Rowena, it is worth observing that, her preposterously Romantic name notwithstanding, she is in every significant respect Ligeia's exact opposite, endowed with just those commonplace qualities Ligeia had so signally lacked. Her family name and landed title imply a quite orthodox kind of personal history. In contradistinction to Ligeia's unearthly behaviour, Rowena, the pawn of mercenary parents, is associated with human motives at once shrewd and worldly. If, in the narrator, the dark lady's recondite knowledge awoke responses too wildly weird for logical comprehension, the blond, teaching nothing and arousing only his contempt, at least proves perfectly intelligible to him. Comparison, in short, makes Rowena dull, ordinary, prosaic, as shrunken and lifeless as her own shrivelled lips. And from the differentiation we suddenly see how "Ligeia" is founded upon an elaborate allegorical scheme, one in which Ligeia–darkness stands for madness and abnormality, while Rowena–light signifies normality and rationality.

This symbolic plan becomes, in fact, both the key to the conclusion of the story and an artistic device which functions at several different levels throughout its final episodes. Imagistically, it appears in the decorations of Rowena's bridal chamber, designed, as the narrator confesses, to reflect his incipient madness and so arranged that jetty figures or dark arabesques are everywhere superimposed across golden backgrounds. It recurs dramatically in the more active symptoms of the narrator's insanity, in his loathing for Rowena and his irrational desire to recover Ligeia among the silences of the night or the darkened recesses of the glens by day. The same dramatic effect is then further heightened during the period of Rowena's illness, for we now hear of shadows falling upon the golden carpet and playing intermittently beneath the rich light thrown from a censer. But the supremely terrifying use of the light–dark imagery is reserved for the night of Rowena's death. While the opium-maddened narrator keeps horrified watch, her corpse is racked by a series of inexplicable convulsions. Again and again she seems on the very verge of reanimation; repeatedly she lapses backward into a sterner, more repulsive lifelessness. It is a struggle which ends only when the dark lady, having triumphed over and literally thrust through the blond, stands before the shrieking narrator, fully revivified and resplendent in her raven blackness. Thus as always in Poe's Gothicized tales (one thinks equally of "Ms. Found in a Bottle" or the much later "Black Cat"), the climax and conclusion come with the achievement of two related conditions: whatever is regular or normal has been displaced by the wholly anomalous; the mind beholding this displacement has itself utterly collapsed. Because of its controlled symbolism, "Ligeia" concludes with an especially striking picture of both states.

Surely, then, no further comments are necessary. "Ligeia" *is* what perceptive critics ranging from Philip Pendleton Cooke to Allen Tate have always called it, a gripping horror story, successfully rescued from the triteness of its kind by Poe's painstaking craftsmanship. It is, to be sure; and yet as one reads and re-reads the narrative, certain trouble-some features persistently intrude. Problems of tone and symbolism, of characterization and, above all, of style, they never for a moment suggest that "Ligeia" is not a piece of Gothic fiction, or that the interpretation I have just offered is not *a* correct reading. What they do imply is that close and searching scrutiny should make us the more wary of accepting it as simply a tale of terror, and as a text in which Gothic devices constitute the sole level of meaning.

At first, indeed, one can cite only a teasing, half-formed suspicion that Poe's allegory, contrived and maintained with such unusual care, could be saying more than it seems to say. But scarcely has this possibility been admitted before stray bits of evidence emerge to support it. Consider the characterization of Ligeia: Is not a shade too much emphasis placed upon her philosophical pursuits and scholastic triumphs, upon qualities only very tenuously related to her tremendous lust for life? By the same token, are there not oddities in her behaviour—in her fierce expressions, her incoherent speech, her coming to the narrator like a disembodied voice—which seem less frightening than merely absurd? Or of the narrator himself: If Poe was writing a tale of the supernatural, why did he create for his spokesman an opium-addict, thereby supplying a potentially naturalistic explanation for the phenomena which occur? In spite of Ligeia's erotic attractions, why does the narrator habitually portray her as his teacher rather than his lover—and as an object to be understood, to be mastered intellectually, rather than adored? Or notice Rowena: Perhaps the least Romantic of Poe's women and certainly intended as the dull norm in this particular tale, why is she nevertheless given an exotic name which outdoes anything else in Poe's richly inventive creation of names? Or take the philosophical undertones running through the story: For what purpose are descriptions of Ligeia, especially of her eyes, couched in a kind of crude metaphysical jargon? Considering Poe's notorious animosity toward Transcendentalism, what shall we make of its importance here for Ligeia and for the narrator?

Beyond these matters, small yet disturbing, a second, somewhat graver issue arises from what might be termed the scope of the allegory, or its overlapping into areas where it appears to be irrelevant. Poe's colour-images, in so far as they relate to characters or descriptive effects, are consistent and flawlessly handled. Yet the symbolism really begins with geographical locales, with dark Germany and fair England, and extends from this initial distinction outward into characterization and drama. Is Germany, therefore, anomalous, while England bespeaks normality? In keeping with other aspects of the allegory, do properties primarily English "succumb" to qualities basically German? Framing these questions, we immediately stumble upon another. As a means of intensifying the unnatural, Poe ordinarily omitted all references to time and place from his horror fiction. Why, foregoing this usual practice, should he not only insert place names here, but also use a combination which carried marked connotations in 1838—and then apparently confuse it with the symbols of his psychological situation? Obviously, England and Germany serve no functional purpose if "Ligeia" is simply a standard tale of madness and the supernatural.

In the last analysis, however, it is the language of "Ligeia" which hardens suspicion into outright certitude. Although I have thus far deliberately avoided quotations, there are, as we shall see, a number of passages, curiously, even jarringly inconsistent with a tale of unrelieved terror. The sense of their inappropriateness derives not from the shrillness of Poe's style: this at least is justified by the emotional orgy in the text. It stems, rather, from stylistic mannerisms in no way requisite to the melodrama—from abrupt breaks in tone, from incongruities of detail, from allusions and far-fetched comparisons which appear to be totally meaningless. This language is heard in places where Poe's innuendo seems cunningly interfused with the narrator's maudlin rant. Most especially it turns up in bursts of rhetoric in which the macabre is almost certainly supplanted by mockery, and in which Ligeia and all she represents are covertly yet unmistakably ridiculed. For these slips, if slips they are, neither the narrator's hysteria nor Poe's tendency toward verbal extravagance provides any real explanation.

Hence for all its general conformity to type, "Ligeia" contains specific disparate elements which defy the typical insights of Poe criticism. Passing from characterization to symbolism to philosophical asides, moving on to the unaccustomed use of place names and through the peculiarities in Poe's language—doing this, we turn away more and more convinced that while on the surface "Ligeia" undoubtedly is a characteristic tale of terror, beneath that surface other, different meanings were deftly smuggled. But what are they, and how shall we go about sifting them out? The answer, I believe, is readily available. For Poe, if my conjectures are in any way accurate, not only intended "Ligeia" as something more than a routine Gothic story. He likewise left clues to his intentions, and he left them close at hand.

II

The first version of "Ligeia" appeared in the September, 1838, issue of the *American Museum of Literature and the Arts*. During this same year, Poe published only two other prose pieces, "Siope—A Fable," written (probably sometime late in 1837) for the January *Baltimore Book,* and "Psyche Zenobia," a burlesque which also appeared in the *American Museum,* just two months after "Ligeia." Both are obvious satires; and although they approach them quite differently, both satirize identical subjects.

A pretentious bit of verbal nonsense, "Siope" was long regarded as one of Poe's most successful experiments in rhythmical indefiniteness. Nevertheless, it is difficult to take very seriously a sketch subtitled "In the manner of the Psychological Autobiographists," and over twenty years ago James Southall Wilson conclusively demonstrated how the fable really rests upon a substratum of pure irony.[1] Pointing to Poe's introductory epigraph

> "Ours is a world of words: Quiet we call
> *Silence*—which is the merest word of all"

and to his preposterous style (rocks rock, water lilies shriek, flowers writhe in perturbed slumber), Professor Wilson suggested that "Siope" represents a sarcastic attack on the Transcendentalists, their mystical chatter and their general predilections for noise. Moreover, he cited as a possible source for Poe's banter Bulwer-Lytton's "Monos and Diamonos." But what he probably overlooked was Poe's indebtedness to materials which were in fact Transcendental, and to writers actually given to psychological autobiography. If "Siope" owes something to "Monos and Diamonos," it seems even more influenced by *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* and by Coleridge's fragment, "The Wanderings of Cain."

Unlike the Bulwer piece, which is clogged by didacticism, Poe's pointless extravaganza is built around a dream vision, one induced, as the demon informs its narrator, by "forbidden sunbeams . . . which slide from off the solemn columns of the melancholy temples in the wilderness."[2] The chaotic images evoked in this forbidden dream strikingly resemble De Quincey's figures; for where his opium nightmares were haunted by crocodiles, religious cults, and strange landscapes, "Siope" abounds in hippopotami, demonisms, and hideous scenes composed of talking flowers and bloody rain. Most significantly, Poe's style and his symbolism are generally far closer to the prose-poetry of De Quincey and Coleridge than to Bulwer's jerkier, less metaphorical writing. "Siope" is rich with the biblical cadences of both the *Con-*

---

[1] James S. Wilson, "The Devil was in It," *American Mercury,* XXIV (Oct., 1931), 215–20.

[2] Quotations are taken from "Siope—A Fable," *The Baltimore Book* (Baltimore, 1838), 79–85.

fessions and the *Wanderings,* and through sheer repetition the device becomes an absurdity. It thrives on an excess of the same emphases and reiterations, the same heaping up of images and conjunctions which we associate with the other two works. In particular, its foremost image, a stone "litten by the moon" and etched by the word desolation, will bear detailed comparison with De Quincey's dream of the prostitute called Ann or the rock symbolism in Coleridge's portrayal of blighted Eden.[3]

All things considered, then, it is hard to imagine that Poe's parody of "Psychological Autobiographists" was aimed at anyone save Coleridge and De Quincey. But, what is both amusing and important, he unquestionably believed he was ridiculing one Transcendentalist writer instead of two. The *Confessions* he assumed to be a hoax perpetrated by Coleridge. This fact stands out clearly in "Psyche Zenobia," where it is included in a still more explicit foray against Transcendentalism.

Actually the later satire hinges upon a double-edged joke. Throughout, Poe tirelessly links Transcendentalist hyperbole to the *clichés* of Gothic writers and, scorning both, he castigates them simultaneously. His bluestocking narrator is a kind of cross between Margaret Fuller and Ann Radcliffe. The Signora Psyche Zenobia writes tales of terror. By her own glib admission, she is *all* soul. Having lately felt the strong lure of Transcendentalism, she has become the most ardent member of a literary-humanitarian society, conspicuously modelled on a New England original. Thus the Signora is evidently intended as the allegorical embodiment of American Romanticism. But disgruntled by the low tone of her associates, she is also determined to plagiarize from English contemporaries. It is, as she concedes, a well-known fact that all fine writing and all deep thinking are concentrated in Scotch and English periodicals. Accordingly, she seeks out "Mr. Blackwood," that living symbol of British Romanticism, in order to learn at first hand the techniques of a *Blackwood's* original.

Although her quest permits Poe to take pot shots at virtually all the literary practices which annoyed him, his bitterest mockery centres upon two sorts of articles—the *"bizarreries"* (apparently the Gothicized tales which had long since become a *Blackwood's* stock in trade) and the "intensities" (presumably the philosophical pieces which Carlyle and Coleridge especially had contributed to *Blackwood's* and the other Edinburgh journals). Mr. Blackwood's comments on each form the heart of the irony, and in them Poe's deliberate pairing of Gothic excesses with Transcendental foibles now begins in deadly earnest. Discussing the horror story, Mr. Blackwood summarizes in two sentences the stereotypes one might expect from a Poe character: " 'Pay minute attention to the sensations.' " " 'Get yourself into such a scrape as no one ever got into before.' "[4] But far from limiting the genre to *l'écrivain des nerfs,* he promptly advocates the use of other carefully chosen themes and styles. Terror and sentiment, he urges, should be interlarded with metaphysics and erudition. " 'Fire and fury' " look best when accompanied by " 'deep philosophy,' " " 'acute speculation,' " and a " 'good spicing of the decidedly unintelligible.' " Furthermore, as he flips through past issues, culling out classics from his own magazine, Mr. Blackwood proves similarly eclectic. If "The Man in the Bell" and "The Dead Alive" are capital examples of the Arabesque, so too is a " 'nice bit of flummery' " reputedly written by Coleridge (though actually done by an intoxicated baboon), a *bizarrerie* called *Confessions of an Opium-Eater.* Plainly, Poe was busily gibing at Coleridge in 1838. Just as plainly, the *Blackwood's* formula for terror is a good deal more flexible than Poe's, or than Poe's is customarily presumed to be.

---

[3] Compare the paragraphs in "Siope" beginning "And, all at once, the moon arose through the thin, ghastly mist . . ." with Thomas De Quincey, *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater, Reprinted from the First Edition* (London, 1885), pp. 144–5 and with "The Wanderings of Cain," *The Poems of Coleridge* (London: John Lane Company, n.d.), pp. 260–1.

For in effect Poe has made his editor-spokesman recommend a *bizarrerie* which likewise incorporates the key characteristics of an *intensity.* And turning next to the mechanics of Transcendentalist writing, Mr. Blackwood slyly inverts his argument, showing this time how readily the *intensity* may share properties of the *bizarrerie.* He commences with what amounts to Poe's splenetic portrayal of the "Crazyites": they see, or purport to see, " 'into the nature of affairs a very great deal farther than anybody else.' " Their material must be heavy with learning and with metaphysical disputation: " 'Talk of the academy and the lyceum,' " Mr. Blackwood counsels; " 'Say something about the Ionic or Italic schools, or about Bossarion, and Kant, and Schelling, and Fichte, and be sure you abuse a man called Locke.' " Their insights are sharpened by literary borrowings, in particular by gleanings from the German: speaking to American Romanticism resolved to pilfer from English Romanticism, Mr. Blackwood advises the additional aping of German Romanticism; as he puts it, " 'A little reading of *The Sorrows of Werther* will carry you a great way.' " Finally, their unusual depth of vision demands a mode of expression equally profound: warming to his subject, Mr. Blackwood concludes the lesson by exposing Psyche Zenobia to a trio of Transcendental styles—to the tones mystic, metaphysical, and heterogenous.

---

[4] Quotations are taken from "Psyche Zenobia," *American Museum of Literature and the Arts,* I (Nov., 1838), 301–10.

Indirection, erudition, and a maximum of confusion are, in turn, the unmistakable marks of each. In the tone mystic, Mr. Blackwood warns, innuendo is essential: you " 'hint all and assert nothing.' " As for the tone metaphysical, it consists of large words, loud ruminations, and a potpourri of philosophical terms. But the tone heterogenous, being a composite of every other tone in the world is, obviously, the most learned style of all: into it go obscure quotations, scraps of foreign languages (there is no passing muster without ancient and modern tongues alike), ethical maxims, and a generous sprinkling of everything else " 'deep, great, odd, piquant, pertinent and pretty.' " One and all, it is worth repeating, these are the styles of an *intensity*, prose mannerisms which Poe by implication imputes to Coleridge, Carlyle, and probably to Emerson. And yet as he lists them, Mr. Blackwood carefully notes that each will resound most brilliantly when the writer is involved in some dreadful predicament, when he is choked on a chicken bone or pursued by bulldogs or hanging from the beam—when, in brief, every gruesome condition of the *bizarrerie* is present. To the end of Mr. Blackwood's harangue, the two forms remain closely yoked; and Psyche Zenobia, bent on comprehending spirituality *and* terror, finds that for *Blackwood's* at least they are very nearly indistinguishable.

"Siope," a ruthless parody of Transcendentalism; "Psyche Zenobia," a merciless burlesque of Transcendental and Gothic writing; and between them the "Ligeia." At first glance, certainly, such a combination appears to do little more than underscore both the variety and the incredible unevenness in Poe's creative methods. Reading "Ligeia" as a straightforward tale of terror and turning then to the satires, one is readily persuaded that Poe himself drifted aimlessly—somewhat too aimlessly—from arrant nonsense into fiction of a high order into a realm of petty drivel, and that under the circumstances this is the only plausible deduction. Still, our initial examination of "Ligeia" unearthed several problems which the conventional approach did not seem fitted to solve. And when, with these matters brought to the foreground, the three pieces are read in the order of their publication, parallels or unexpected possibilities for parallels abruptly crystallize.

For one thing, it quickly becomes apparent that both "Siope" with its Gothic background plus its inarguable irony and "Psyche Zenobia" with its strange synthesis of *bizarrerie* and *intensity* ought to make us doubly sceptical of another tale of terror which contains any sort of questionable leavening. If Poe could play a trick once, he could likewise perform it twice; if he could theorize about a combination of Gothic *clichés* and Transcendental gibberish, he could also put theory into practice. But this is far from being all. "Siope" with its lush prose and "Psyche Zenobia" with its sardonic commentary on philosophical styles to be emphasized in terrifying situations should prompt us to look cautiously at other passages where Poe's language is a shade too full, a trace too mystical or metaphysical. And there is more. Just as "Siope" might well put us on guard for other references to opium dreams and Transcendentalism, just so "Psyche Zenobia" should alert us to another text in which Transcendentalism, Germany, England, indeed a kind of international motif figure large though ambiguously. And still more. Both implicitly and explicitly "Ligeia" *does* share qualities of the satires. Slight though it is, the allegorical method in "Psyche Zenobia" reminds us that "Ligeia" too is allegory. The pursuits ascribed to the lady Ligeia prefigure Mr. Blackwood's precepts. In "Ligeia" there are certain words and phrases which relate backward to "Siope," look ahead to "Psyche Zenobia."

Then, suddenly, what has hitherto been a vaguely tantalizing possibility assumes definite shape and tumbles neatly into place. The burlesques published before and after "Ligeia" illuminate certain difficult aspects of "Ligeia" precisely because "Ligeia" is partly burlesque. Like "Siope," its predecessor, it combines Gothic overplot with satiric underside. Full of terror and sentiment but also of metaphysics and erudition, it duplicates the ideal horror story delineated in "Psyche Zenobia," its sequel. It is, in a word, an allegory of terror, almost perfectly co-ordinated with the subtlest of allegorized jests.

III

> Broad noon shall be my England of the senses and the understanding; the night shall be my Germany of mystic philosophy and dreams.
>
> —Emerson's *Nature*

> Close thy *Byron*; open thy *Goethe*.
>
> —Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*

> Into this [wine decanter] you may put a quart of ruby-colored laudanum; that and a book of German metaphysics placed by its side, will sufficiently attest my being in the neighborhood.
>
> —De Quincey's *Confessions of an Opium-Eater*

In the surface-allegory, the lady Ligeia stands for mystery and madness, for an inflexible will to live, and for symbolic unreason. In the allegorized jest, her meanings are tailored to exemplify the mystery of a particular form of madness.

She was of a German background. Her studies "were more than all else adapted to deaden impressions of the outward world."[5] The narrator felt her "rare learning" and "enthralling eloquence" creep into his heart by paces "steadily and stealthily progressive." Often, he remained unaware of her presence except as a "low sweet voice" drifting through his closed study. Ligeia's beauty "was the radiance of an opium dream"; and—in words lifted directly out of "Siope"—it was a vision more wildly divine "than the phantasies which hovered about the slumbering souls of the daughters of Delos."[6] Additionally, her physical appearance shared the luxuriant grace of the Hebrews and the majestic spirituality of the Greeks.

Ligeia's eyes were the seat of a profound spirituality. During moments of "intense excitement," the "luminous orbs" acquired a beauty wholly distinct "from the formation, or the color, or the brilliancy of the features." At such times, their *"expression"* was of supreme importance, for it became rich with a metaphysical allusiveness, reflected back to the narrator "the beauty of beings either above or apart from the earth." Yet there was something immoderately singular about Ligeia's *"expression."* Ineffable and inscrutable, it resembled Mr. Blackwood's "tone mystic," hinting much but asserting nothing. Even for the narrator, who sought after complete understanding, the *"expression"* represented a "word of no meaning"; like *Silence* ("which is the merest word of all"), *"expression"* was a "vast latitude of mere sound [behind which] we entrench our ignorance of so much of the spiritual." But if Ligeia's profoundest glances were themselves unknowable, they did reproduce faint traces of their spirituality in an endless circle of known analogies—in "the commonest objects of the universe" and in "many existences in the material world."[7]

Ligeia's intellect was immense. An "*intensity* in thought" set her apart from all others; and her learning, "gigantic" and "astounding," fanned out in every direction, came at last to encompass every conceivable area of knowledge. She was deeply proficient "in the classical tongues" and in all the "modern dialects of Europe." (Recall how the benefits of " 'French, Spanish, Italian, German, Latin, and Greek' "

[5] Quotations are taken from "Ligeia," *ibid.*, I (Sept., 1838), 25–37.

[6] In the 1838 version of "Siope," the narrator's dream vision was also more beautiful "than the phantasies which hovered about the slumbering souls of the daughters of Delos."

[7] Compare "*Expression* . . . word of no meaning behind whose vast latitude of mere sound we intrench our ignorance of so much of the spiritual" ("Ligeia") with "Quiet we call *Silence*—which is the merest word of all" ("Siope") and with " '*If*! Distressing monosyllable! what a world of mystery, and meaning and doubt and uncertainty are involved in thy two letters!' " ("Psyche Zenobia"). Poe was strangely fascinated by the spirituality of words in 1838!

were to be impressed upon Psyche Zenobia.) Her mastery extended over all "the most admired, because simply the most abstruse of the boasted erudition of the academy." (" 'Talk of the academy and the lyceum,' " Psyche Zenobia would soon be counselled.) With astonishing ease, she traversed "*all* the wide areas of moral, natural, and mathematical science." (Psyche Zenobia was to hear much of Fichte, Kant, and Bossarion.) She guided the narrator, a child by contrast, through the "chaotic world of metaphysical investigation." (The schools Italic and Ionic, the terms *a priori* and *a posteriori* were to be important parts of Psyche Zenobia's education.) And then comes the key comment which lends both point and purpose to this altogether ludicrous account of Ligeia. Her "presence, her readings alone, rendered vividly luminous the many mysteries of . . . transcendentalism." Ligeia was a Transcendentalist.

She symbolizes, in sober fact, the very incarnation of German idealism, German Transcendentalism provided with an allegorical form. First suggested by her nationality and mystical behaviour and subjectivistic studies, her role in the satire is further betrayed by the meaningless meaning of her strangely metaphysical eyes. It is re-emphasized by her spiritual glances, unintelligible except for their reappearance in material existences. It is rounded out by her "intensities," her personification of just the qualities Psyche Zenobia would presently be urged to cultivate, her elucidation of Transcendental mysteries. If, however, additional evidence seems desirable, it can easily be drawn from the narrator's attitude toward and his relationship with Ligeia.

In the Gothic overplot, the narrator is pictured as a psychopath, as a bereaved husband, and as the recording consciousness, shattered by the anomalies it perceives. In the satiric underside of "Ligeia," his lunacy becomes the lunacy of a confirmed "Crazyite."

The narrator was Ligeia's student in the sense that the dark lady was his teacher. He was a student of Ligeia in the sense that she represented the object of his studies. As the "unfathomable meaning of [Ligeia's] glance" sank deeply into his soul, the narrator longed for larger understanding. Relentlessly, he pondered her expression. Throughout the "whole of a midsummer night," he "struggled to fathom it." What was it, he never wearied of asking himself, "What was it—that something more profound than the well of Democritus—which lay far within the pupils of my beloved? What *was* it? . . . Those eyes! those large, those shining, those divine orbs!" But when no response was forthcoming, he temporarily abandoned all hopes for complete comprehension, and contented himself with "discovering in the commonest objects of the universe, a circle of analogies to that expression." He recognized something of its spirituality in the

> survey of a rapidly growing vine—in the contemplation of a moth, a butterfly, a chrysalis, a stream of running water . . . in the ocean, in the falling of a meteor . . . in the glances of unusually aged people . . . [in] one or two stars . . . [in] certain sounds from stringed instruments . . . [in] passages from books . . . in a volume of Joseph Glanvill . . .: 'And the will therein lieth, which dieth not. Who knoweth the mysteries of the will, with its vigor? For God is but a great will pervading all things by nature of its intentness. Man doth not yield him to the angels utterly, save only through the weakness of his feeble will.'

Of the dozen or so items in this list, only one—the so-called Glanvill quotation—bears directly upon the overplot. For the rest, they simply suggest that Poe is slyly mocking Ligeia's spiritual depths by comparing them to an assortment of oddly incongruous details, by describing them in prose very like the "tone heterogenous." And opening up this possibility, they instantly remind one of the Transcendentalists who were likewise glimpsing spiritual analogues in the "commonest objects of the universe," in such " 'pertinent and pretty' " places as nature, clothes-symbols, and the works of German literature.

For the narrator, Ligeia posed an unsolved metaphysical riddle. But mystified and entranced by her rare learning, he confidently assumed that she herself would ultimately unravel the puzzle which she herself symbolized. Humbly aware of her "infinite supremacy," he pursued like an eager child the obscure import of her teachings. And, as he expresses it,

> With how vast a triumph—with how vivid a delight—with how much of all that is ethereal in hope—did I *feel*, as she bent over me, in studies but little sought for—but less known that delicious vista by slow but very perceptible degrees expanding before me, down whose long, gorgeous, and all untrodden path I might at length pass onward to the goal of a wisdom too divinely precious not to be forbidden.

Then, as before, there comes the final comment, justifying this fantastic, this almost obscene overwriting. At the foot of the path lay full mastery of the "many mysteries of the transcendentalism" in which the narrator was immersed. By first portraying himself as the student of Ligeia and next as the student of Transcendentalism, by passing at once from the many mysteries of Ligeia to the many mysteries of Transcendentalism, Poe's spokesman has confirmed the dark lady's place in the satire—and thereby disclosed his own.

Actually two things are fundamentally dubious about the narrator's reference to Transcendental pursuits. Although Poe's tales of terror frequently picture the human mind in its gradual advance upon esoteric knowledge, the exact nature of the new discovery is seldom, if ever, divulged. In "Ms. Found in a Bottle" or "The Fall of the House of Usher," no character can even visualize, much less define, the awful mysteries for which he is compelled to search; their vagueness is an indispensable adjunct to the supernaturalism in the story. Here, by contrast, the object of the intellectual quest is not merely named. It is explicitly embodied in another character and, what is yet more suspect, it is given the selfsame label Poe had already flayed once and would flay again in the year 1838. Surely, these facts are of overriding significance: surely, they contribute all the proof needed to identify the narrator as a prototype of Poe's favourite whipping-boy, the Transcendentalist who speaks the language of a *Blackwood's intensity*, who looks into the "nature of affairs a very great deal farther than anybody else," and whose intellectual pretensions are bolstered by gleanings from the German.

Ligeia died; and her death, her fierce struggles, and grim wrestlings with the shadow belong to the Gothic overplot. The narrator's reaction, however, is a different matter. Recounting Ligeia's fatal illness, he makes it clear that his chief bereavement was the loss of her informing glances. When her eyes, at once the symbol of the Transcendental puzzle and the avenue to its resolution, shone "less and less frequently upon the pages over which [he] poured," the narrator's despair knew no bounds. Wanting the "radiant luster" of those eyes, he cries in an agony of grief, "letters, lambent and golden, grew duller than Saturnian lead." Not simply letters, but golden letters; this, as it happens, is the initial allusion to gold, one of the two basic colours in Poe's allegory.

Other gold-images quickly accumulate once the narrator arrives in England. England itself is "fair." Rowena Trevanion of Tremaine is "fair-haired." The accoutrements of the narrator's English estate include gold carpets, golden candelabra, gold tapestries and ottomans, chains and pendants of solid gold. Yet despite the garish splendour of all these objects, none are permitted to shine with a pure golden radiance. Across one wall of the apartment where they were located and where the narrator dwelt with Rowena, there ran a single window-pane. It was "an immense sheet of unbroken glass . . . and tinted of a leaden hue, so that the rays of either sun or moon, passing through it, fell with a ghastly luster on the objects within." Now there is, to be sure, nothing inherently peculiar in such a window; it is sinister-looking and blends sufficiently well into the Gothic backdrop. Nevertheless, its appearance in this context does balance out a curious parallel. In effect, Poe has transferred to Rowena and to the English

✓

mise en scène the same leaden dullness which overspread the golden letters of Transcendentalism when the German Ligeia could no longer gloss and enrich their inmost meanings.

As we have noticed, several features connected with the abbey, with Rowena, and with the narrator's behaviour in fair England are not readily assimilable into the surface allegory. But if, as seems likely, Poe's colour scheme is less a matter of coincidence than of malicious design, these apparent inanities merge in the allegorized satire and become the cream of the jest.

The abbey was situated in one of "the wildest and least frequented portions of fair England," in a region notoriously "remote and unsocial." Surrounded by "gloomy" and "dreary grandeur," overhung with "mossy" ruin, "aged vine," and "verdant decay," the external building faced upon a "savage domain." Within, were "melancholy and time-honored memories," castellated turrets, ceilings "excessively lofty, vaulted, and elaborately fretted with the wildest and most grotesque specimens of a semi-Gothic, semi-druidical device." Clearly enough, this reads much like a typical Poe setting. But the trouble is that it typifies, almost too perfectly, the whole of an intellectual-aesthetic era as well. Swamped by a welter of Romantic *clichés* and perceiving how each is quite uncharacteristically pinned down to a specific geographical locale, we suspect that the English abbey, like the lady Ligeia and Mr. Blackwood's editorial rooms, is less a traditional Poe-symbol than a merely traditional symbol, exposed here to Poe's acid parody. The abbey could be—and, in point of fact, there is abundant evidence for stating it is—a take-off on Scott's scenic effects;[8] similarly, it could be interpreted as Poe's caricature of the desolate landscape at Craigenputtock or of the Lake Country and the "violet by the mossy stone."

---

[8] The curious correspondence between Poe's Rowena and the blonde Rowena in *Ivanhoe* leads on to other suggestive parallels. Ligeia's dark beauty is likened to the grace of the Hebrews. And her "raven-black . . . and naturally curling tresses," her nose with its "tendency to the aquiline," her "brilliant black eyes," her "slightly irregular brows," her "teeth glancing back with a brilliancy almost startling" all suggest Scott's Jewish Rebecca who is notable for "the brilliancy of her [black] eyes, the superb arch of her eyebrows, her well-formed aquiline nose, her teeth white as pearl, and the profusion of her sable tresses," each "arranged in its own little spiral of twisted curls." In "Ligeia," the narrator's abbey had "lofty walls, gigantic in height—even unproportionably so." They were hung from "summit to foot" with a "heavy, massy-looking tapestry," of a material like the "carpet on the floor" and "spotted all over" with figures "wrought upon the cloth in patterns." Rowena's couch was overhung by a canopy, resembling the tapestries and of a cloth of "richest gold"; the hangings in her chamber were stirred "by the artificial introduction of a strong continual current of wind beneath the draperies." In *Ivanhoe,* Cedric's manorial hall is of a height "greatly disproportioned" to its length. The walls "were covered with hangings or curtains, and upon the floor there was a carpet, both adorned [with decorations] executed with brilliant or rather gaudy coloring." Rowena's bed was adorned with "the same rich tapestry which covered the walls" and was "interwoven with gold and silver threads"; the walls of *her* apartment were "so full of crevices, that the rich hangings shook to the night blast." Finally, Poe's references to Saracenic decora-

Filling any or all of these roles, the abbey is brilliantly suited to its principal English occupant, the lady Rowena Trevanion of Tremaine. With her name drawn equally out of *Ivanhoe* and "Christabel,"[9] Rowena, we may fairly assume, is the living incarnation of English Romanticism, English Romantic—or English Transcendental—thought cloaked in allegorical trappings. Yet in the narrator's view, the lady of Tremaine was as destitute of Ligeia's miraculous insights as of her stupendous learning and oracular gibberish. Conventional and dull, the blond was simply another of those golden objects overcast by the leaden-grey window. Only in a moment "of his mental alienation" did she seem to the narrator to be a fit "successor of the unforgotten Ligeia"; soon he came to loathe her "with a hatred belonging more to demon than to man." Rowena, in short, symbolizes an impoverished English Romanticism, as yet "unspiritualized" by German cant. Consequently, she represents but a shallow pretense of Romanticism; and—on this point the text is admirably plain—it is a part of Poe's joke to make her Romantic in nothing save her borrowed name.

Despising Rowena, abandoning himself to orgies of grief, the narrator increasingly revelled "(oh with what intensity of regret)" in recollections of Ligeia's "purity, of her wisdom, of her lofty, her ethereal nature." He perpetuated her memory in the lavish *décor* of his chambers. Appropriately, he invoked her spirit in nature, calling "aloud upon her name . . . among the sheltered recesses of the glens." Chiefly, however, he sought to recover her mystical being in the wild hallucinations engendered by opium. From the outset, we observed, he identified Ligeia's transcendent beauty with an opium dream, and early betrayed something of Poe's satiric intent by describing her in terms first used in "Siope." Now when his spirit most burned to unite with "all the fires of [Ligeia's] own," he was habitually fettered "in the shackles of the drug." As the author of *Confessions of an Opium-*

---

tions, the superstitions of the Northman (later changed to Norman), and the guilty slumbers of the monk all indicate the influence of *Ivanhoe*.

Why should Poe have apparently parodied Scott? He would not have known that important episodes in *Ivanhoe* were lifted from Goethe's *Goetz von Berlichingen*. But by 1838 he would have read Scott's enthusiastic critique of Hoffman and the German supernaturalists in "On the Supernatural in Fictitious Composition." Hence by parodying *Ivanhoe* he was not only poking fun at English Romanticism. He was also including Scott among the English Romantics—the Rowenas—who paid undue homage to the German counterparts—their Ligeias.

[9] "Murmuring o'er the name again, Lord Ronald de Vaux of Tryermaine. . . ." "Christabel," II, ll. 406–7.

Eater (in Poe's mind, Coleridge) deplored the dearth of English philosophy and boasted in the same breath of his opium feats and wide readings from the German, so Poe's narrator, contemptuous of the English Rowena, gave himself up to drugged visions of the German Ligeia. The very decorations, where emblems of Ligeia's dark spirituality were scattered across Rowena's grey-gold dullness, took their "colouring from [his] dreams." Excited by opium, he shrieked Ligeia's name "during the silences of the night." In a drugged frenzy, he glimpsed her mystical shadow, and felt his "whole soul was awakened within." Opium and Ligeia were inseparable; together with nature, the narcotic became a means of restoring the dark lady "to the pathways she had abandoned upon earth."[10]

But there is, to repeat, no satisfactory reason why the narrator's addiction should appear in the Gothic overplot. Inevitably, it weakens the climax of the tale, suggesting that what the narrator finally beholds is more delusion than objective circumstance. Hence it goes far toward vitiating the drama of Ligeia's restoration—unless, of course, that restoration is susceptible to a second interpretation.

When Poe's friend and critic Philip Pendleton Cooke examined the first published version of "Ligeia," he complained of only one major defect. For the sake of fuller credibility, he insisted, the conclusion should have been somewhat modified. The completed transition from Rowena to Ligeia was a "violation of the ghostly proprieties"; a reader would be shocked into unbelief upon discovering how a "wandering essence . . . could, *in quickening the body of the Lady Rowena* (such is the idea) become suddenly the visible, bodily, Ligeia." Poe made great show of agreeing. "Touching Ligeia," he replied, "you are right —all right—throughout. . . . I should have intimated that the *will* did not perfect its intention—there should have been a relapse—a final one—and Ligeia should be at length entombed as Rowena—the bodily alterations having gradually faded away."[11] Yet the fact remains that twice during the next seven years "Ligeia" underwent revisions extensive and slight; and on both occasions Poe left essentially unchanged the ending for which he had so profusely apologized. Did he retain the objectionable climax because, as he rather lamely (and, for that matter, rather inaccurately) told Cooke, it differentiated between "Ligeia" and the earlier "Morella"? Or did he retain it because, hugely enjoying the second, secret meaning of his "wandering

[10] De Quincey, *Confessions,* pp. 11, 97, 155.

[11] Cooke to Poe, September 16, 1839; *Life and Letters of Edgar Allan Poe,* ed. James A. Harrison (New York: Thomas A. Crowell & Co.), II, 50. Poe to Cooke, September 21, 1839; *The Letters of Edgar Allan Poe,* ed. John W. Ostrom (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948), II, 110.

essence," he recognized that Ligeia's bodily conquest of Rowena was absolutely necessary for the satire? In view of all that has gone before and in terms of the conclusion itself, the latter alternative seems considerably more plausible.

For what, in its largest sense, does the "ghostly" transformation in "Ligeia" signify? Why, nothing less, really, than a dramatic enactment of what would become one of the most comic sections of "Psyche Zenobia." To the Signora—fretting because her Romantic compatriots lacked "profundity . . . reading . . . metaphysics . . . spirituality . . . cant . . . with a capital K," fretting because "there was no investigation of first causes, first principles . . . no attention paid to that great point the 'fitness of things' "—to this sorely tried lady, Mr. Blackwood would offer sage words of wisdom. Write many languages. Master metaphysics. Talk of the academy. Bring in the words *a priori* and *a posteriori*. Stress the Germans; above all, stress the Germans. Abuse Locke, but praise Fichte, Schelling and Kant. Make *The Sorrows of Werther* a by-word. Collectively, these are the pomposities which will reanimate the deadest of Romanticisms. Since it is Mr. Blackwood who compiles them, they are, manifestly, the generating root of English Romanticism itself. Symbolized in the lady Ligeia, they constitute the "chronic disease" and the "distemper of fancy" which topple Rowena's reason "from her throne." In turn, they become the vital forces which rejuvenate Rowena, dispell her clammy pallor, quicken her into new life—but re-shape her until she is unrecognizable except as Ligeia.

Here, then, at least, shrieks the narrator when his long vigil has been rewarded: "Here, then, at least . . . can I never—can I never be mistaken—these are the full, and the black, and the wild eyes of the lady—of the lady Ligeia." At the end, it is Ligeia's mystical *expression* which prevails. Reflecting a metaphysical beauty, discernible in nature and dreams, pondered by the student of Transcendentalism, this "vast latitude of mere sound" is Ligeia's link with German idealism. And now, the "word of no meaning" has left its ineffaceable stamp upon Rowena. In the allegorized jest, therefore, qualities fundamentally German do indeed take primacy over properties basically English. For Poe has compounded terror with satire, and the triumph of German sources over an English Romanticism, hopelessly uninspired without them, could hardly be more complete.

HOW PROGRESSIVE ARE THE "PROGRESSIVES"?

ALEX S. MOWAT

SO-CALLED "progressive" education has been under fire in the United States for a good many years, and has in recent years come under fire also in Canada. In fact one might almost say that it has become the fashion to attack "progressive" schools, as it used to be the fashion to attack "traditionalist" schools. There has been a good deal of abuse on both sides, and in Canada at least a certain flippancy, which has tended to obscure or direct attention away from more fundamental matters of educational theory. It seems to me that Canadian educators as a whole are over-concerned with matters of administrative detail, teaching method or curriculum planning and that they are too ready to pooh-pooh serious consideration of the theories that underlie all educational practice. It is true that Canadian schools, compared with schools in the United States, have so far been little affected by "progressive" methods. But this does not lessen the need for examination and discussion of "progressive" educational theories.

There is no doubt that the theoretical foundations of "progressive" education do need examination. It is also the fact that John Dewey's pragmatic philosophy is the stuff from which those foundations are fashioned. Yet people have often speculated upon the origin of Dewey's influence. His own personality was not superficially attractive. He had none of the arts of a popularizer. As a lecturer he was dull; as a writer he was difficult. Yet the influence of his philosophy in the United States has been enormous. Charles Beard, the historian, goes so far as to call it *the* American philosophy. There can be little doubt that the strength of this influence came first from the fact that his philosophy was congenial to the country and to the age in which he lived. But it also arose from his supreme confidence in his own message, which he compares in one place to "The Copernican Revolution." He everywhere consistently maintains that all previous philosophies are outmoded, that his own philosophy is something new, and that it and it alone can solve the problems of the contemporary scene. Further it must be stated that he puts his case in a very thorough, moderate and convincing manner. Nonetheless Dewey's claim has too often been admitted without sufficiently careful examination of its basis. It is, I think, significant that while Dewey's philosophy has caused widespread inundations among educators, among philosophers it has never created more than a good-sized ripple.

Vol. XXIV, no. 1, Oct., 1954

I take it as agreed that all educators need a philosophy and that educational practice in the schools is *always* based on some philosophical theory even though the connection between theory and practice is imperfectly understood by or unknown to the teacher. Such a theoretical basis Dewey supplies. Indeed he regards the supplying of such a basis as the very essence of philosophy itself. Further, no other modern philosopher in the English-speaking world supplies such a basis except, perhaps, Whitehead; but Whitehead's philosophy is so difficult that it is likely to be some time before he is sufficiently understood to affect the schools. Perhaps he never will. It used to be said at Columbia University "Great is Dewey and Kilpatrick is his prophet." But Whitehead's educational prophet has not yet arrived; and he is needed far more than Kilpatrick ever was. For Dewey himself in the most careful and thorough manner worked out the implications for education of his philosophical point of view, anticipating many possible objections; he thus forced any discussion of modern educational theory in the English-speaking world to begin with him. It has often justifiably been suggested that his style is obscure. But it must be said that Dewey is sometimes obscure for the same reason that Kant and Plato are sometimes obscure, because they are dealing with problems and conceptions which are in themselves exceedingly difficult to understand and to express in language. Upon occasion Dewey writes very well. I think that any unbiassed reader of his book *Reconstruction in Philosophy* will find it on the whole both lucid and convincing. As Albert Lynd says, contrasting him with some of his followers, Dewey was "one of the most unconfused persons in America." Granted his fundamental premises, his philosophy hangs together amazingly well. It is in his followers (or some of them) that confusion of thought and a ridiculous turgidity of style are found, not in himself.

Like many philosophers, Dewey was sometimes misunderstood by his followers. (Incidentally, unlike many, he lived long enough to protest against some of these misunderstandings.) Three of those misunderstandings may, in justice to Dewey, be briefly mentioned here. (1) Dewey, who was himself a prodigious worker all his life, never maintained that school should be all play, but that self-discipline should be substituted for drudgery imposed by a taskmaster. The catch phrase "Learning is Fun," used by some who profess to be his followers, is enough to make him turn in his grave. Learning is *not* fun. It is a serious (though not therefore a distasteful) business, and none knew it better than Dewey himself. (2) Despite the anti-intellectual bias of some "progressives," Dewey's philosophy is not anti-intellectual. On the contrary it is over-intellectual. Nothing can be clearer than that. His writings are studded with phrases declaring that the only hope of mankind is the proper use of intelligence or understanding. This is a constant theme in at least three of his books, *Democracy and Education*, *The Quest for Certainty*, and *Reconstruction in Philosophy*. A single quotation is, I think, enough to illustrate this aspect of his teaching: "Intelligent action is the sole ultimate resource of mankind in every field whatsoever" (*The Quest for Certainty*). (3) Dewey never said that the study of the past should be discontinued. On the contrary he repeatedly emphasizes the relevance of the past to the present and generously acknowledges his own debt as a philosopher to Plato and Hegel. What he *did* say was that study of the past should be connected to the present. The past, he said, "adds a new dimension to life, but on condition that it be seen as the past *of* the present, and not as another and disconnected world."

Has the whole "progressive" movement, then, gone astray from Dewey's principles? Are its merits drawn from elsewhere? Are its excesses the result of misunderstanding or misrepresentation of Dewey? Only partly. I believe that the undeniable merits of some "progressive" practices derive directly from Dewey and also that some of the most serious "progressive" shortcomings are the direct result of fundamental flaws and gaps in Dewey's philosophy. Like Dr. Hilda Neatby and other opponents of the "progressives," I consider that the shortcomings outbalance the merits. But one must grant honour where honour is due. In particular one must admire Dewey's insistence everywhere and at all times on the *relevance* of learning. There is no true teacher yet born who is unaware of the danger of "getting in a rut," of doing something this year merely because it was done last year, of teaching something merely because one happens to know it, of doling out lessons mechanically day by day instead of making them live. To all teachers so tempted Dewey's philosophy is a perpetual warning, and Dewey intended it to be so. We must also be grateful for his emphasis upon the unity of studies, upon their integration with life, and upon the interrelation of theory and practice. This writer would like to record his personal gratitude for having first learnt from Dewey to keep asking himself in regard to educational theories, "How will it work out in practice?" We are in his debt also for the importance which he attaches to the educational process and for the systematic and thorough way in which he considers all aspects of the educational problem.

Nonetheless if we are wide awake when we read his books certain omissions and difficulties soon appear. They may be briefly summed up.

1. There is a remarkable absence of references to modern psychology, many of the discoveries and theories of which are highly relevant to educational practice. In particular no consideration is given to the Gestalt psychology nor to the work done in the United States and elsewhere on individual differences. Indeed it would seem that Dewey does not even recognize the existence of individual differences. For example, in *Democracy and Education* there is the categorical statement, "How one person's abilities compare in quantity with those of another is none of the teacher's business." This is an extraordinary statement to come from one who has been hailed as the first of modern educational philosophers. It is of course unfair to expect Dewey to know anything of the recent work in the factorial analysis of human ability. But Terman and Köhler began their work during the First World War and their results were published during or soon after the war. The truth appears to be that Dewey's psychological views were firmly fixed before 1900 and that he had little acquaintance with the development of psychology after the time of William James.

2. A second well-known difficulty arises from Dewey's statement that the moral status of an action must be judged by its consequences. It is for this view that he is taken severely to task by Bertrand Russell in his *History of Western Philosophy*. How are the consequences to be judged? By *their* consequences? This is not merely a verbal quibble, but involves a greater difficulty. The answer seems to be that consequences are good if they lead to "growth." What then is "growth"? Growth leads to richer experiences. What does "richer" mean? Apparently it means simply "more" experiences. This does not seem a satisfactory basis for morals.

3. Like Alexander Meiklejohn, I find Dewey's interpretation of democracy "misleading and incomplete." For example, he does not deal with the educational implications of the representative nature of modern democratic government. Nor does he show any recognition of the different views of democracy which are designated as Jeffersonianism and Jacksonianism in the Harvard Report on *General Education in a Free Society*. Without discussion he appears to take it for granted that his view of democracy as "shared experience" is the only possible one. I suppose it is unfair to expect him to have considered the views of such modern writers on political theory as A. D. Lindsay, Harold Laski, or Carl Becker, but one might reasonably expect some mention of, say, Acton and Bryce. There is none.

In this respect, as in others, it is impossible not to feel that Dewey is simply out of date—a very serious fault according to his own theories, and one which his followers would do well to consider carefully. If they believe that what they follow must always be up to date, they must realize that Dewey's ideas are now rather old-fashioned. But to say that a philosophical viewpoint is wrong simply because it is old is both unfair and very dangerous. Machiavelli's *Prince* and Plato's *Republic* were written a long time ago and in circumstances vastly different from those of the modern world; yet much of their content is most apposite to the present time because they deal with fundamental political problems in a serious and thorough manner. I do not think that this can be said of Dewey's discussion of democracy. If you believe that doctrines necessarily become obsolete with changing times, then you must admit that Dewey's are now at least obsolescent. If you believe that doctrines are to be discarded only because they are incomplete or confused, you will at least have to examine Dewey's theory of democracy very carefully. I think you will find it unsatisfying.

4. As J. Oliver Buswell points out very clearly in his book entitled *The Philosophies of F. R. Tennant and John Dewey,* Dewey rejects dualisms, yet constantly employs dualistic nomenclature. A simple example is to be found in the early pages of *Art as Experience,* on the first page of which the author is at pains to establish that the work of art is not the product of the artist but "what the product does with and in experience." Yet on the very next page we find the statement, "By common consent, the Parthenon is a great work of art." It may be said in defence that to speak consistently in the new way would involve the invention of a whole new vocabulary. But this is precisely Buswell's complaint. In similar circumstances Kant *invented* a new vocabulary. So, apparently, has Whitehead. Dewey has not.

5. As Buswell also points out, Dewey at times becomes (or tends to become) a propagandist rather than a philosopher; that is, he seems more intent upon having his own doctrines accepted than upon finding the truth. He sets up men of straw in order to knock them down. He condemns doctrines on the ground of their historical origin. He presses upon the reader by sheer weight of verbiage. He piles one sweeping statement upon another until the reader wilts and gives in. By sheer persistence he wears you down. Yet if you read him carefully sentence by sentence you will often find room for doubt or disagreement. A few sentences from *Democracy and Education* will illustrate what I mean. The comments in brackets are intended to suggest the thoughts that might occur to a careful reader. Here is the quotation (from p. 143 of the 1936 edition):

"The aim of efficiency, like any educational aim, must be included within the process of experience. [What does this mean? Can an "aim" be included in a "process"?] When it is measurable by tangible external products, and not by the achieving of a distinctively valuable experience, it becomes materialistic. [What is the "it" referred to here, "aim" or "efficiency"? Does the first "it" refer to "efficiency" and the second to "aim"?] Results in the way of commodities which may be the outgrowth of an efficient personality are, in the strictest sense, by-products of education. [But is this true? What does it mean?]"

I do not pretend that this passage was chosen at random. But I affirm that it is not unfairly taken from its context and that it is typical of much of Dewey's writing. On the whole it is surprising how little positive teaching there is in Dewey. Should anyone doubt this I suggest that he read *Democracy and Education* carefully and then ask himself two questions: (*a*) What proportion of the book is merely critical and destructive, and (*b*) What are the positive doctrines stated? He will, I think, have some difficulty with (*b*).

Having said that, let me state very briefly what appear to me to be the most important of Dewey's doctrines, (1) change (not entities) is the great reality; (2) all dualisms are false; and (3) man's salvation lies in the scientific method. These three propositions are extraordinarily interesting and a great deal could be said about each of them. However, I shall here restrict myself to following through the consequences for education of Dewey's rejection of a single dualism, but that the most important, that dualism which William James described as "mind knowing and thing known." In this statement James appears as a thorough-going dualist. But it is well known that elsewhere he developed the idea that the relations between existences are every bit as real as the existences themselves. Out of this came his doctrine of "the passing thought the thinker." This is the doctrine that Dewey embraces. I do not think, however, that you will find in Dewey any categorical rejection of the subject-object dualism, though it is implicit in much of what he says, and, in my opinion, is basic to his whole philosophy. However that may be, we *do* find this dualism explicitly rejected in Kilpatrick. Nothing could be clearer than Kilpatrick's rejection as expressed on pages 182–4 of his ***Philosophy of Education.*** If the master does not explicitly make the rejection his prophet does. And since the prophet has probably had more influence upon educators than the master, we may assume the effects of its rejection as important. Whether educators understand its nature and origin or not, it seems to me evident that disregard of the subject-object dualism has in fact been widespread among the "progressives" and is the root cause of their mistakes.

For what are the consequences of this attitude? Let me list some of them briefly: (1) If the subject-object dualism is rejected, what is left? Experience. Hence Dewey's (and the progressives') excessive emphasis upon experience. (2) If there is no separable subject, no attributes can be attached to it. Thus, for example, there can be no native differences in intelligence. (3) If the "object" has no separable existence, no attributes can be attached to it. There is therefore no means for evaluating subject-matter. All experiences are "experience" and all are equally valuable. (4) If "experience" alone exists, then scientific method is equally applicable to all situations. One result of this is the burgeoning of all sorts of ridiculous so-called "research" projects, with all the apparatus of scientific planning and the mathematics of probability. Some of this valueless research is the result of stupid people attempting to use a method they do not understand, but from the standpoint of the dualist it is also clear that much of it is the result of attempting to apply a method to situations where it is inapplicable. (5) A further result of the rejection of the subject-object and other dualisms is the blurring of the outlines of thought. It is not unfair, I think, to paraphrase Dewey's treatment of such dualisms as "interest v. effort" or "means v. ends" as follows. "There is really no such thing as black, or white. There is only grey. Black is only an extremely dark grey, white a very light one, and there are all degrees in between. Henceforth we will talk only of grey." The result is that indubitable differences in *shades* of grey are neglected and thinking becomes woolly and confused. (Incidentally the subject-object dualism is not of similar type to the black-white, or the interest-effort dualism, though Dewey seems to think it is.) All these consequences of Dewey's position seem to me to be characteristic of those educators who call themselves "progressives."

There is only one other aspect of Dewey's general viewpoint that I should like to touch on. This is his expectation that every man shall be his own philosopher, that is, that every man shall start with his own experience of life, and form unaided his own theories and personally test them. This is Dewey's over-intellectuality which we mentioned previously. It has had two results. First, a disastrous neglect of tradition. For every thinker, like every artist, *must* start both from experience *and* from a tradition. The shallowness of many of Dewey's followers is a direct result of this neglect. Second, it soon becomes evident that the majority of men have neither the time nor the ability nor the inclination to work out their philosophy from scratch. The result has been what has been called the anti-intellectuality, or better, the pseudo-intellectuality of the progressives. They are not content to teach their doctrine. They must make pretence that those who accept it have worked it out for themselves. Hence their surveys, their questionnaires, and their contrived discussion groups.

It is just possible that somebody, having read thus far, may say, "Well, isn't Dewey's philosophy ridiculous! How were we ever taken in by it? Let's throw it out at once." I am not one of those who think Dewey philosophically disreputable. For those who are not already aware of them, I must point out that there are very great difficulties in the dualist position. The point I wish to make is that a person cannot be both a dualist and a follower of Dewey. The two points of view are incompatible. Personally I am a dualist, mainly on empirical grounds, and I am convinced that any satisfactory educational philosophy must begin from the dualist position.

On the other hand I have no doubt that if any "progressive" reads this article he will straightway accuse me of being a traditionalist, of failing to live up to the times, of cleaving to an outworn creed, etc., etc. This prospect leaves me completely unmoved. The true-blue "progressive," who is as hidebound in his opinions as anyone, will in time himself become a traditionalist, if indeed he has not become one already. But as we have already said, it is no real condemnation of a doctrine merely to say it is not up-to-date. The reign of Dewey in educational philosophy is passing, not because his doctrines are out of date but because their weaknesses are being discovered. All educators should read Dewey himself, not his expositors. But they should also read other modern writers who have a positive philosophy to expound such as Sir Richard Livingstone, Dr. Hutchins, or Canon Bell. Canadian educators especially should read a book by a Canadian which is not nearly so well known as it should be, John Macdonald's *Mind, School and Civilisation*. Whether you agree with his opinions or not, it must, I think, be admitted that alone of modern Canadian writers on education Macdonald has gone down into the philosophical deeps, that he can find his way around there, and that he can express his conclusions with brevity and force. Too many of the rest of us have paddled around for too long in the intellectual shallows. It is time to take a plunge into deeper waters. What do they know of Dewey who only Dewey know?

MATTHEW ARNOLD VISITS CHICAGO

John P. Long

On Sunday morning, January 20, 1884, the following advertisement appeared in the columns of the *Chicago Daily Inter-Ocean*:

Central Music Hall

THE MATTHEW ARNOLD LECTURES

Mr. R. D'Oyly Carte has the honor to announce two lectures only, in this city, by the distinguished poet, critic, and essayist, Mr.

MATTHEW ARNOLD

On the following dates:

Tuesday Eve'G. Jan. 22.
Subject, "NUMBERS: Or, the Majority and the Remnant."

Thursday Eve'G. Jan. 24.
Subject: "EMERSON."

Tickets, with reserved seats, 50¢, 75¢ and $1.00
Doors open at 7:15. Lecture at 8.
Tickets at the box office.

Matthew Arnold had arrived in Chicago the previous evening. A fresh wind blew across Lake Michigan from the northwest, and at ten o'clock the temperature was nine above zero. Mr. Arnold had lectured in Ann Arbor, Michigan, on Friday night to thirteen hundred students of the University of Michigan and had been most cordially received. He was descending now upon a city which had been incorporated only fifty-one years ago, on August 5, 1833. Twenty-one years before that, in 1812, many of the citizens of the old Fort Dearborn had been massacred by Indians on the sandy dunes two miles south of the fort at the mouth of the river.

In 1884 Chicago's explosive growth had left some astonishing results. It had become a city half-frontier, half-cultured. Mr. Henry Abbey's Grand Italian Opera Company was opening a two weeks' engagement at Haverly's Theatre. The noted singer, Adelina Patti, she of the golden voice, was billed at McVicker's, accompanied by a "Full Orchestra and Chorus of Her Majesty's Opera." At the West Side Dime Museum there were two attractions: a man with an elastic skin, and the world's smallest Celestial. Sioux Indians who had taken part with Sitting Bull in the Custer Massacre in 1876 were on exhibit at the Great Chicago Museum and Theatre. Mr. Henry Irving, the celebrated Shakespearean actor, had just completed a most successful engagement. On Sunday, January 20, the *Chicago Tribune* commented on Irving's tour:

> The receptivity of Chicago audiences must have been very gratifying to Mr. Irving during his most successful engagement of two weeks. His success was . . . an artistic triumph. People had grown weary of the old-school actors, with their ranting, their idolized shortcomings which they called traditions, and the shabby accessories in the midst of which they posed. . . .

The city had grown considerably in culture since the great fire of 1871. While the young aldermen Bathhouse John and Hinky Dink, the lords of the levee, turned their attention to vice and politics, civic and cultural Chicago had moved swiftly. Northwestern University had been founded in 1851, and the University of Chicago in 1854. The Potter Palmer castle on Michigan Avenue, built in 1882, towered structurally and socially over Chicago's élite Near North Side. In 1880 Oscar Wilde had visited the city. Two years later, the famed French actress Sarah Bernhardt once more set the city agog. The eighties had become an age of quiet elegance, with gas-lit streets, shady lawns, and brownstone houses. The rolling mills and the stockyards brought wealth to Chicago. It was a city of fabulous growth: rich, bawdy, ambitious, a metropolis of shocking economic contrasts. It was to greet this society, and this culture, that Matthew Arnold stepped off the Michigan Central train at 7:40 P.M. on Saturday night, January 19, 1884.

II

On Saturday afternoon the reporter for the *Chicago Daily Inter-Ocean* boarded Matthew Arnold's train at Tolleston, a small junction town seventeen miles southeast of the city. In next day's issue of the *Inter-Ocean,* the interview was given prominent space, with the headline:

MATTHEW ARNOLD

The Apostle of Sweetness and Light
Sojourning Here Awhile
Striking Characteristics of the Man
Noticed During an Interview
Kindly Accorded

> "Mr. Arnold?"
>
> "Yes, sir."
>
> The reporter turned down his collar and pulled off his gloves. It was ever so comfortable in the . . . parlor car; . . . the wind, bearing the driving snow, had been playing fantastic aeolian airs amid the responsive wires out there on the deserted platform beyond the station of Tolleston.

The reporter describes Arnold:

> . . . His is a tall figure, not essentially spare. . . . His features are large, full of character—nobility it would not be miscalled. Chin and lip are void of beard, cropped whiskers, a bit gray, adorn his cheeks. His eyes are blue, not shy with vagabond glances, but firm. . . . The light within them is trustworthy.

Mr. Arnold's monocle was of extraordinary interest:

> . . . With the rubber-framed eye-glass pendant from his neck he does not consider it absolutely essential to distort his visage every consecutive moment.
>
> THIS BRITISH TOY
>
> of mysterious uses is there, however, and is adjusted in the bony orbit of the right optic when occasion demands. . . . Historians have yet to be who shall determine whether or no the English eye-glass really did come over in the possession of some Norman dude in the retinue of William the Conqueror. . . . His voice of course has the inflections which an American need not think himself a traitor for enjoying. . . .
>
> . . . Arnold is a ready, fluent talker. With the faintest knowledge of his position in literature you are easily prepared to believe him an exceptional man. . . . Urbanity, generosity, and sympathy seem to possess a thorough gentleman. . . .
>
> And what did he (Arnold) think of American newspapers?
>
> "They are very smart," responded the critic. . . . But as for the headlines, they were the things that absorbed him, to his infinite wonder and amusement. Such leaded talks as "A Man Turned Into A Woman" had occupied him for some two or three months. . . .

Before the reporter "relinquished his distinguished prey to the inquisition of an esteemed contemporary," he asked Arnold what he meant by "Philistinism," a word, the reporter wrote, "uncoined until added to the world's vocabulary by the poet, essayist, and critic, Matthew Arnold." Arnold replied:

> "Well, it's that hard, dogged, narrow opposition to the children of light, the chosen people. In the place I speak of [Arnold had referred to his essay on Heine], I say we haven't the word, because, perhaps, we have so much of the thing. Yes, of the thing. Yes, of the thing I mean there is a good deal home and a good deal here," and the poet smiled.

The *Chicago Tribune,* which only the day before had published a long analysis of the art of Alphonse Daudet, described Arnold in its issue of Sunday, January 20:

> Mr. Arnold is a tall spare man, with a fine, thoughtful face. . . . His flow of language is fluent and rapid, and though his speech is marked by a very broad accent, the assuring "you know" of the Englishman is seldom used. . . . Yesterday he wore a suit of dark cloth, a wide black necktie was loosely tied in a sailor-knot around a pointed stand-up collar, and the only jewelry he wore was a slender watch chain upon his vest. . . .
>
> When twenty-second street was reached the party began to prepare to leave the train. Mr. Arnold put on his overcoat, overshoes, silk hat, and gloves, put a single glass on his eye, took a slender umbrella in his hand, gathered up his parcels and was ready to alight.

The Arnolds—father, mother, and daughter Lucy—were met at the station by their host, General Alexander Calwell McClurg, a publisher who had served with distinction in the American Civil War.

The *Inter-Ocean* of January 20 continues the story of Arnold's visit:

> On their arrival they . . . were escorted to the house of their future host, General A. C. McClurg. . . . After refreshment . . . Mr. Arnold was taken to the rooms of the club in Portland Block. A distinguished assemblage awaited the coming of this pre-eminent apostle of "sweetness and light." About 10:30 o'clock some ninety-two gentlemen seated themselves. . . . An hour later the congenial gathering . . . extended a fitting welcome to the notable guest from England. Mr. Arnold replied, unbounded sympathy of feeling manifesting itself in brotherly applause. . . .

The dinner was given by the Chicago Literary Club, founded April 21, 1874. Later we shall examine the astonishing part an unknown member of the club played in the famous Matthew Arnold hoax which took place the following April.

What were the effects of the entertainment upon Arnold himself? He tells of his experiences in a letter to his daughter, Nelly, dated Sunday, January 21, 1884:

> MY DARLING NELLY—
>
> . . . We got here late last night. We are staying with a great bookseller, who is also a general. . . . He really was made a general in the Civil War . . . but it is odd to address a bookseller as *General.* We arrived at the station at eight in the evening. . . . After a hasty dinner he hurried me off to a reception at the Literary Club. . . . The whole club filed out to supper. . . . I, . . . having just dined, had to go through the whole course, from oysters to ice, with plenty of champagne. Then the President welcomed me in the name of the club to Chicago. I returned thanks in a short speech. Then two other members of the club made speeches, one about my poetry, the other about my prose. . . . We broke up about midnight. . . . The papers get more and more amusing as we get west. A Detroit newspaper compared me, as I stooped now and then to look at my manuscript on a music stool, to "an elderly bird pecking at grapes on a trellis"—that is the style of thing. . . .
>
> Your own loving
> PAPA

There was some apprehension in Arnold's mind as to the success of his Chicago visit. He had commented in his letter to Nelly: "Irving has just been here, and the opera is beginning now that he is gone, so that I doubt whether my very grave entertainment will draw full houses here, but we shall see. . . ."

On Monday, January 21, the famed *Sharps And Flats* column in the *Chicago Daily News* sounded the first ominous note in the Chicago press:

> Mr. Matthew Arnold went out on the Madison Street bridge yesterday and took a whiff of the Chicago River. Then he returned to his hotel and wrote a pale-green poem that will have to be disinfected and deodorized before it is printed for public circulation.

Although the column in which this apocryphal piece of news appeared was unsigned, its author was Eugene Field, thirty-four years old, one-time student at Williams College, bibliophile, and later the famous poet of childhood, author of the much quoted *Little Boy Blue*. The cause of his unhappy literary allusion to Arnold is not discoverable, but Field's later shafts of irony testify to his continued aversion to Matthew Arnold.

On Monday evening, January 21, the *Chicago Evening Journal* wrote briefly of Arnold's visit:

> Matthew Arnold, the distinguished English writer and lecturer, reached this city Saturday night, and has gone to Milwaukee, where he will lecture this evening. On Tuesday and Thursday evenings of this week he will lecture in Central Music Hall, in this city.

In a few days, Mr. Arnold would receive considerably more attention from the sedate *Journal*.

Arnold's letter to his sister Frances tells of his Milwaukee lecture:

> Union Club, Chicago,
> January 23, 1884.
>
> MY DEAREST FAN—
> . . . The day before yesterday I went by train to lecture at Milwaukee, 90 miles up the lake, and the principal town in Wisconsin; . . . We had a crowded lecture, and next morning, under a bright sun and a sharp frost, . . . drove . . . to the edge of the bluff above the lake. It was a glorious sight. Michigan is 400 miles long and 80 miles broad; the water was alive, and moving right up to the shore; ducks, which come down from the Arctic regions to winter, were swimming and sporting near the shore; then came long narrow packs of floating ice, washed from shallow creeks along the shore; beyond that the width of waters, as blue as I ever saw the Mediterranean. . . . your most affectionate brother,
>
> M.A.

In the same letter he wrote, antithetically, of Chicago: "This is a great, uninteresting place of 600,000 inhabitants, and *entrepot,* for trade between the East and the West. There are some beautiful parks, covering twenty miles, I believe, but in this weather we can see little of them. The striking thing in this city is its situation on the southwestern shore of Lake Michigan. Michigan does not freeze like Lake Erie, it is so deep, and fed by so many springs."

On Wednesday morning, January 23, on page 1, the *Chicago Daily News* gave complete coverage to Matthew Arnold's first lecture in Chicago:

> ### VIRTUE OF A MINORITY
>
> Matthew Arnold's Lecture on "Numbers,"
> . . . How the Great Litterateur
> Speaks, Looks, and Acts on the Platform.
>
> Matthew Arnold, the noted English man of letters, lectured last evening . . . on 'Numbers.' The subject was hardly suggested by the size of his audience, which numbered only about six hundred. The "unsound majority," referred to by him frequently in his lectures, were evidently at the opera. . . .
>
> . . . His lecture was of a character to deeply interest the literati, but by the average listener, and especially the society lady who must occasionally adjust a hairpin or straighten a ribbon, it was doubtless regarded as stupid.
>
> Mr. Arnold was introduced . . . by Mr. Franklin MacVeagh, . . . and, . . . in the words of Lord Coleridge, he was the most distinguished of living Englishmen. . . . Mr. Arnold sat stolidly gazing at the audience with his right eye through a single glass. . . . The main idea elucidated was that the majority was always unsound—wrong, in fact,—and that the hope of a nation or race rested in the righteous minority. . . .

The *Chicago Inter-Ocean* was in a happier frame of mind. Its summary, January 23, read:

> Mr. Matthew Arnold addressed Chicago last evening. . . . Mr. MacVeagh . . . alluded to the great knowledge of Mr. Arnold, his rare understanding of his times and race, his literary style— . . . his united gifts of prose and poetry, happening in a few famous instances in literary history. . . . Mr. MacVeagh further eulogized Mr. Arnold as a man who had not thought flattery wise, a man whose recognition was of significance to culture itself. . . . Grant, that he (Arnold) repeated; but what is each intelligent repetition but another side light? His rhetoric had not complexities; in its scholarship it was an entertainment. . . .

Mr. Arnold's single eye-glass continued to fascinate the Chicago reporters. On January 23 the *Tribune* singles it out at once:

> MATTHEW ARNOLD
> The English Lecturer Talks on
> 'Numbers' to About Four
> Hundreds of Them
>
> Mr. Matthew Arnold . . . was in full evening dress, minus gloves, and his hair was parted in the centre. When seated himself on the platform he scanned the audience through a single eye-glass. . . . He spoke louder than he did in New York, and could be heard pretty distinctly in all parts of the house, but, while he no longer lowers his voice at the end of a sentence, he still mouths his words, and occasionally those within ten feet were unable to hear what he said. But, if the New York criticisms were true, his delivery has improved greatly as a whole. . . .

The *Tribune* gave the complete text of Arnold's essay, interpolating the following headings: "The Select Few," "Sages and Saints," "Righteousness," "England and Ireland," "French Literature," and "War, a Dangerous Moral Disease," and "The Situation in America."

In Arnold's final message there was little reminiscent of the apostle of sweetness and light:

> In a great democratic community such as this the danger was in the absence of the discipline of respect, in the want of soul and delicacy, in prevalent hardness, boastfulness, materialism, and false modesty and false audacity . . . and, even supposing that, by the necessity of things, the majority of men in the present stage of the world be unsound, yet with an incomparable, all-transforming remnant we might fondly hope for things to happily continue.

If the *Chicago Tribune* showed little enthusiasm for or appreciation of Mr. Arnold's first lecture, a citizen who posted a letter immediately following the talk was quite enthusiastic. The letter was printed in the issue of January 23:

> A Correspondent's Criticism
> Chicago, Jan. 22—(Editor of the Tribune.)—
>
> Mr. Matthew Arnold ended his delightful and instructive lecture in this city last evening by the prediction (implied) that the Teutonic element in this country would save America through its "seriousness." He evidently took the audience to be purely Teutonic. Mr. Franklin MacVeagh, the chairman, is surely not a Teuton; the gentleman who sat next to me in the audience was a pure Celt; so were the gentleman and the three ladies who accompanied him who sat behind me, and the journalist who sat a few seats away. . . .
>
> (signed) J. S.

III

On Thursday night, January 24, Matthew Arnold lectured on Emerson. The *Chicago Tribune* next day gave two columns to the event:

> AN ESTIMATE OF EMERSON
> Matthew Arnold's Second Lecture
> In Chicago Somewhat Better
> Attended.
> Emerson Neither a Great Poet,
> Philosopher, Nor Man of Letters
> 'No Genius for Style.'
> His Essays, However, the Most Important
> Prose Works of the Century. . . .
>
> The lecture of Mr. Matthew Arnold on "Emerson" . . . drew a much larger crowd to the Central Music Hall last night than the first one. . . .
>
> Mr. Arnold introduced himself. . . . His hair was parted in the middle, as before, and he was in evening dress, but the single eyeglass was missing, and he did not apply the handkerchief which he holds in one hand while speaking so frequently to his chin. His delivery was very good indeed . . . and he mouthed very few words. . . .

The article ended with a direct reference by Arnold to Emerson:

> "I figure him as upon earth still," said Mr. Arnold in conclusion, "and still standing by Boston Bay in his habit as he lived, . . . with one hand stretching toward the East to our laden and laboring England, the other toward the ever-great west, to his own, dear loved, America—'great, intelligent, sensual, avaricious America' . . . ." (applause)

The *Chicago Evening Journal*, however, struck the hardest blow at the reputation of Matthew Arnold, or at least damaged his name with Chicagoans, the majority of whom were indifferent to or suspicious of things British. The issue of January 22 had been restrained, the *Journal* printing only a letter from a reader:

> A Welcome to Matthew Arnold
>
> Chicago, January 21.—In adding my voice of welcome to our distinguished visitor, I can say nothing more hearty than to wish him as much enjoyment here as I experienced in my visit to his old home at Rugby one year ago last June. . . .
>
> (signed) D.G. Jr.

The letter describes at great length the English countryside, an idyllic visit to Rugby, and quotes the verse of both Keats and Shelley.

On Friday evening, January 25, however, Arnold's lecture on "Emerson" was given prominent space:

> In his lecture on Emerson, Matthew Arnold declares that he was neither a "great poet" nor a "great philosophical writer." Deprive the famous Bostonion of his plumes as a poet and a philosopher, and what would there be left of him? Yet Mr. Arnold concedes to him other remarkable qualities, but they are not those which have caused his name to be enrolled among the great men of modern times. We are inclined

to think that a discerning posterity will award to Emerson as bright a crown, both as a poet and a philosopher, as that which it will bestow upon the erudite Mr. Arnold himself.

On Saturday night, January 26, the editorial indictment reached its climax:

> All things considered, it is not surprising that Matthew Arnold's two lectures in this city were almost failures, so far as attendance was concerned. The first lecture, on "Numbers," was listened to by about four hundred people, and the second, on Emerson, drew a larger crowd, but both the addresses were disappointments. Mr. Arnold has been as unfortunate in his selection of subjects as is his treatment of them. His lecture on "Numbers" is intended to be an arraignment of the wisdom of the majority—the governing principle in a republican form of government—and Mr. Arnold has come 3,000 miles to warn us of the dangers which lie in ambush for us as a nation from that source. . . . Mr. Arnold lives in a country where the "remnant" is composed of a few aristocrats who rule the "Numbers" by divine right, as they contend, but the government is no more stable, the laws no more beneficent, the people no more happy, the country no more prosperous, than the great American Republic, where the "Numbers" are at the front and the "remnant" are on the back seat. A nation that is a hundred years old already . . . need not make any apologies for sitting down at the head of the table when the great powers of the earth hold a banquet.
>
> . . . The common people all over the world are looking to the supremacy of "numbers" as the sovereign remedy for the evils of government which have been inflicted upon them by the meanness, tyranny, and selfishness of the "remnant" that Mr. Matthew Arnold extols.

The writer concludes in a last bitter paragraph:

> And, having succeeded in telling us what Emerson was not, Mr. Arnold has left us entirely in the dark as to the kind of man he really was. Perhaps he wisely declined to attempt to enlighten us on the last point, for the good reason that he did not know himself.

There was no comment from Arnold on the *Journal*'s appraisal of his lectures. His next letter, to his sister Frances, is dated "St. Louis, February 1st," in which he wrote: "When I think of England, the desire to be back rises sometimes into a passion. . . ."

Matthew Arnold did not return to Chicago, but the journalists were not finished with the apostle of sweetness and light. On February 4, Eugene Field wrote in his *Sharps And Flats* column in the *Chicago Daily News*:

> Matthew Arnold goes about now with the troubled expression of a man who has bitten off more than he can chew and the embarrassed air of a man who expected to catch on and didn't.

On February 7 Mr. Field again wrote:

Matthew Arnold says that Chicago impresses him as the most beautiful and cultured city in America. We hope this high compliment was not inspired by the fact that one of our largest manufacturers recently named a new brand of leaf-lard in honor of the eminent critic and poet.

Arnold's entire American trip had begun to pale. In New York City, on February 28, he wrote to a friend, Walter Arnold: ". . . The business is nearly at an end. It will not have brought the profit which some people expected, but it will bring a good sum, and has shown me how a really large profit may be made if I come again. But when I once get safe over to the other side, shall I ever bring myself to start on such an errand again?" In the same letter he wrote, in an apogee of feeling, "Quebec is the most interesting thing by much that I have seen on the Continent, and I think I would sooner be a poor priest in Quebec than a rich hog-merchant in Chicago."

Arnold was to sail for England in March.

IV

In April, 1884, the noted Matthew Arnold Hoax took place. The unhappy incident is told in a history of the Chicago Literary Club, published in 1926.[1] In a chapter titled, "The Matthew Arnold Hoax," we read:

> The season of 1883–1884 . . . will always be a season memorable in the annals of the club because of the dinner to Matthew Arnold on January 19, 1884, and the famous newspaper hoax that was its sequel. . . . The hoax which was perpetrated in April, after Mr. Arnold had returned to England, was conceived and in large part executed by one of our members who is still on the resident list. It was a brilliant performance cleverly designed to trip up the Chicago Tribune, which, for some time previously, had been suspected by journalists on the staff of The Chicago Daily News of appropriating without acknowledgement special dispatches printed in the earliest edition of the New York Tribune. What purported to be an article contributed by Mr. Arnold to the Pall Mall Gazette was concocted by our member who displayed much ingenuity in imitating the eminent English author's style. . . .

Arnold's alleged letter follows:

> "That which most impressed me during my stay in Chicago, . . . was a certain assumption of culture, which, upon close observation, I found to be very superficially varnished over a solid basis of Philistinism. . . . Of ethical culture there is hardly any pretense. From sheer force of habit the members of the clergy dispense from the pulpit their weekly modicum of diluted moralities, and from sheer force of fashion the more respectable classes of the population give apparent heed to what is said to them. But

---

[1] Frederick William Gookin, *The Chicago Literary Club* (Chicago, 1926, privately printed), 80–3.

it would be safe to say that the condition of the trade in tinned meats, or in pork, or in grain has the largest share of their thoughts, even during the hour of ostensible devotion. . . .

"The prevailing attitude of Chicago society toward things of culture has about it an air of patronage. It seems to say: 'These things are desirable, and we will make them the fashion.' All that need be done is to build costly chapels, to purchase expensive pictures, to make the concert and the opera places of fashionable resort. . . ."

The story of the hoax continues:

> It was arranged by the conspirators that this should be printed in just one copy of the earliest edition of The New York Tribune on Sunday, April 6, 1884, and that this copy should get into the hands of the New York representative of The Chicago Tribune. Naturally he lost no time in telegraphing such a choice morsel to this city, and it appeared in the next morning's paper adorned with the headlines:
>
> MATTHEW ARNOLD
>
> England's Incomparable Egotist Gives
> A Few of His Impressions of Chicago
>
> Surprise and Chagrin
> That Commercial Men Should Invade
> The Realm of Culture
>
> The statements made were so sensational that reporters were sent out to interview many prominent citizens, and among them several members of this club. Few of them, alas, recognized the spurious character of the article. . . . David Swing was among those whose comments were printed the next morning. "I do not care to say much," he answered the interviewer; but he did, and at the end remarked: "The Pall Mall letter reminds one of that limburger cheese which Mark Twain traveled with. Its wonderful odor coming from a hidden cause led the brakeman to remark: 'Not much heliotrope in the air.' All one can say is that Matthew Arnold carries in his soul a limburger cheese that does not resemble the heliotrope." . . .

The *Tribune's* editorial blast at Arnold in the issue of Monday, April 7, was conclusive:

> . . . Mr. Arnold has evidently not forgotten the small audiences which greeted his presence in this city, and has a livelier imagination than most people have hitherto credited to him. It is unlucky for everybody that Matthew Arnold came to America at all. He had many admirers on this side of the water before his advent. Very few Americans like him now.

On April 8 a subscriber in the *Tribune* referred to "Mr. Matthew Arnold, the apostle from the land of snobbery. . . ." General McClurg defended Arnold and the battle between the majority, who were suspicious of Arnold, and the remnant, who remained loyal, continued furiously in the columns of the *Tribune*.

On Wednesday evening, April 9, the *Chicago Daily News* exposed the hoax on its front page:

> THE CRUELEST HOAX OF ALL
>
> How the Chicago Cable-Dispatch Snatcher
> Was Caught in His Own Shears
> Editor Joseph Medill's Melancholy
> Experience with the Apostle
> of Sweetness and Light
>
> Hoaxes have been played before upon newspapers, large and small. . . . But it may be said that no more brazen piece of piracy has ever been done by any newspaper . . . than was practiced upon the Chicago Tribune in the matter of the spurious Matthew Arnold cablegram. The way in which the Daily News has succeeded in galling its contemporary, and in tearing the mask of a hypocritical pseudo morality off its face, deserves detailed mention. . . . Even this morning, at the same hour that the Daily News fully exposed the humorously chastised trick . . . the latter sheet contained a long editorial on the advisibility of rigorously excluding henceforth all British guests of distinction from our homes as well as from our own clubs. . . . Now that the whole bubble has been punctured by the little lance of the Daily News, it will be interesting to watch the change of heart and the change of base that will be found necessary and salubrious by our "esteemed contemporary."

Arnold wrote of the hoax in his essay, *Civilization in the United States*: ". . . It was a poor hoax, but many people were taken in and were excusably angry. . . . A friend telegraphed to me to know if I had written the criticism. I, of course, instantly telegraphed that I had not written a syllable of it. . . ."

Matthew Arnold sailed for England on March 5, 1884. A year later, in his essay *A Word More about America,* he wrote: "I said that of aristocracy, as we know it here, I should expect to find, of course, in the United States the total absence; that our lower class I should expect to find absent in a great degree, while my old familiar friend, the middle class, I should expect to find in full possession of the land."

Matthew Arnold had left Chicago to the Philistines, his old familiar friends.

THE MOST AUDACIOUS NOVEL

A. E. Carter

L'époque classique est peut-être le moment où la France est allée le plus loin dans cet approfondissement de l'homme intérieur qui est le but de sa littérature.—Henri Peyre.

FOR the last few years, the bookshops of the Boulevard Saint-Germain have had a volume in their windows with an alluring label: "le plus audacieux roman de notre littérature."[1] If you pick it up, you discover that it is a new edition of Choderlos de Laclos' novel, *Les Liaisons dangereuses*, first published in 1782. The most audacious novel! At first glance, the phrase looks like a shameless attempt to sell a book on the strength of a pornographic cover. For at least a century and a half, French literature has been periodically jolted by "audacious" novels, some of which have even got their authors into the police courts. Yet a romance contemporary with Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette, composed seven years before the Revolution, is now advertised as surpassing all the rest for daring.

When Laclos wrote *Les Liaisons dangereuses* he was a middle-aged artillery officer with some dull years of garrison life to his credit and a taste for light verse. When he died twenty years later, he had produced a tract on the education of girls, mixed in the Revolution, had a narrow escape from the guillotine, and been created a general by Napoleon. A rather undistinguished life, on the whole (for in those days there was nothing unusual in a brush with the scaffold), and in the middle of it, the phenomenon of *Les Liaisons dangereuses*. The immediate result of the book was a scandal. It was read, but not admired; it was even described as "infamous." A number of Parisian hostesses closed their doors to the author. Critics like Grimm, even though they praised the volume, classed it with such contemporary pornography as *Le Portier des Chartreux*. Later on, during the nineteenth century, it was sold under the counter; and while it continued to attract the attention of such clairvoyant spirits as Stendhal and Baudelaire, it did not come into its own until the present century, when its success has been very great.

All of which is not easy to explain. Why a soldier of forty, who began his literary career with half a dozen insipid odes, and finished it with a treatise on the upbringing of young ladies, should have stopped midway to produce a masterpiece of eroticism, is an insoluble problem.

---

[1] Monaco: Les Editions du Rocher, 1948.

Nor was female education Laclos' only interest. After the Revolution began he wrote pamphlets designed to push the Duke of Orleans onto the throne, and spent several years studying ballistics. He even produced a number of new shells, some of which are said to have played a decisive role in the battle of Valmy. As for the scandal, we can understand without much difficulty why the book shocked the nineteenth century. The nineteenth century, as everybody knows, was easily shocked; and there is a good deal of the scandalous about *Les Liaisons dangereuses.* It gives a detailed account of the six months' campaign carried out by the Vicomte de Valmont to seduce the virtuous Mme de Tourvel: stratagems, attacks, temporary defeats, and final success. During the course of this siege, he pauses long enough to snap up a tempting little morsel in the shape of Cécile de Volanges, who happens to be staying at the same country-house; and not content with seducing her, he initiates her into every refinement of vice. All this is highly reprehensible, of course; the more so as Valmont discusses both innocence and virtue with a peculiarly vicious relish, as condiments for the jaded palate. But, if it is easy to see why the nineteenth century was horrified, the case of the eighteenth is not so simple. For by 1782 the eighteenth century had had a long experience of the scandalous, both in literature and in life. It had *Le Sopha* and *Thérèse philosophe,* the Regency and the court of Louis XV. It was shortly to have the novels of the Marquis de Sade and the sanguinary debauches of the Revolution. It was well acquainted with such catastrophes as Mme de Tourvel's, and even better with misadventures like Cécile's: the seduced virgin, or the virgin in danger of being seduced, is a staple of the art and literature of the age, as much so as the Cupids which swarm over its clocks or the curves and spasms of its bronze and marquetry. There is nothing particularly audacious about this side of *Les Liaisons*, the more so as Laclos wrote in a strictly classical style, avoiding all suggestion of coarseness. The book does not contain one scene that even approaches the fleshy realism of Zola's *La Terre,* or of any dozen English and American novels of the past forty years.

It has been called the portrait of a degenerate age; and, since no period likes to see itself presented in an unflattering light, this might explain the eighteenth century's distaste. But is the society depicted in *Les Liaisons* so very corrupt? There has been a good deal of confusion on this point, confusion due in large measure to Laclos himself. He used to boast, during the Terror, that he had exposed the vices of the *ci-devant* aristocracy. It is impossible to take such a statement seriously. For one thing, it was obviously the sort of claim to make at a time when the nobility was being carted piecemeal to the guillotine, and when Laclos, in the pay of Philippe Egalité, was doing his best to be a good Jacobin. And for another, it is not true. The two principal characters, Valmont and the Marquise de Merteuil, have morals of a conspicuous looseness. But most of the other personages are virtuous by any standards. Danceny is *sensible* in the best Rousseau style; Cécile is Valmont's victim rather than his accomplice; and nobody would call Mme de Rosemonde, Mme de Tourvel, nor Mme de Volanges anything but virtuous. Mme de Volanges has a number of almost mid-Victorian characteristics, such as writing warning letters against persons suspected of loose morals. As the painting of an immoral age, *Les Liaisons dangereuses* leaves much to be desired. It depicts a world which attached a high price to the proprieties. As the plot unrolls, we hear of at least three women who were hounded from society because they conducted their love affairs too indiscreetly. Even Mme de Merteuil is a proof of the high moral tone the age demanded. If hypocrisy is the homage vice pays to virtue, then her whole career is a long homage to virtue. No woman ever went to such lengths to conceal her life, and Laclos even felt obliged to tack on a conventional ending in which she is represented as socially ostracized. *Les Liaisons dangereuses* is an embarrassing document for those who like to dream themselves back into an eighteenth-century paradise of *chaises-longues* and unimpeded dalliance. Clearly, the audacity of the book is of another order.

It lies in the character of Mme de Merteuil, but in a different way than is usually supposed. We get a clue to this from the strictures of some of Laclos' contemporaries. His hardest critics were women; and if we read what Mme de Genlis or Mme Riccoboni write about *Les Liaisons,* we discover that they have nothing much to say about Valmont. The person they cannot accept is Mme de Merteuil. Neither lady explains just why she finds the Marquise so odious; she would probably have been somewhat embarrassed to do so. For after all, literature has always dealt with the unscrupulous woman, or at least with the woman who defies the moral code. Her crimes and her amours have furnished subjects for the greatest tragedies and the sharpest satire. Clytemnestra, Agrippina, Cleopatra, Lady Macbeth are almost stock characters. By comparison with their lurid careers, what are the peccadilloes of Mme de Merteuil? A few love affairs, not one murder, not even a suspicion of the criminous. Certainly nothing that would supply the materials for a tragedy. The truth is that Mme de Merteuil does not resemble any of those illustrious females. Each one of them is dominated by her passions; each is possessed; and it is this possession that lifts each above the limitations of her sex and gives her strength to flout the conventions. The eventual downfall of these heroines results from the fact that the conventions prove too strong in the long run to be flouted. And, at bottom, it may be questioned whether any of them really wants to flout the conventions. They are not emancipated, but insane, if only temporarily. They may break the rules outwardly, but they accept them in their hearts; the last scene of their careers usually shows them a prey to remorse. They resemble in every way the women Mme de Merteuil despised : "Ces femmes à délire, et qui se disent *à sentiments*," as she calls them, "dont l'imagination exaltée ferait croire que la nature a placé leurs sens dans leur tête." A perusal of the average tragedy leaves one with the impression that a heroine can be as unbridled as Messalina, trifle at will with the arsenic bottle, and stab all her relations. If she does it because of some overwhelming passion—love, hatred, jealousy, ambition—she wins the sympathy of the spectator. But if her mind remains clear, her lusts under control? . . . Then she is unpardonable; she is monstrous; she is Mme de Merteuil.

The Marquise is one of those strange creations which appear from time to time in literature, like Hamlet or Julien Sorel or Stavrogin. The initial idea from which they spring is usually something very simple: a legend, a newspaper item. But, nourished on the author's own substance, borrowing strength from obscure tendencies and forces which were dispersed unnoticed in the contemporary atmosphere, they swell and expand until, like the djin from the bottle, they assume proportions out of all relation to their original size. The audacity of such a character as Mme de Merteuil becomes apparent if we compare Laclos' novel with a book which is probably its immediate source: Richardson's *Clarissa*. Reminiscences of *Clarissa* are frequent throughout *Les Liaisons*. But on one essential point the two works differ: there is no Mme de Merteuil in *Clarissa*. It is possible that Laclos, planning his novel as a series of letters, first conceived the Marquise as little more than Valmont's correspondent, an indispensable dictaphone into which he could relate his rake's progress, very much as Lovelace confesses himself to John Belford. But when he made her a woman, the whole design of his book was altered. It was possible to present Valmont without preliminary explanations. He belonged to his age; it accepted him without comment. Cold-blooded promiscuity, the ability to divorce intellect and emotion, was permitted men. Far otherwise was the case of Mme de Merteuil. The eighteenth-century woman was not free; she was bound by a hundred conventions, both sentimental and social. If she broke the rules, she had to be represented as a raving Maenad, like Hermione or Phèdre, or the victim of scheming man, like Clarissa Harlowe or Mme de Tourvel. Neither type would have done in the context of *Les Liaisons*; such a woman could never have had Valmont's confidence, much less received his letters and given him advice. Something quite different was necessary: a woman capable of meeting man on his own ground, a woman free from all the prejudices which confined her sex. And since no such woman had ever been seen, she had to be analysed and explained in such detail that she automatically dominated the entire plot of the novel. *Les Liaisons* ceased to be, like *Clarissa,* a conflict between virtue and vice, and became instead a demonstration of intellectual and moral emancipation, as represented by Mme de Merteuil.

In a long letter (no. LXXXI) to Valmont, the Marquise explains herself. Hers is a philosophy of power, power achieved through mastery of the emotions. At first glance it might be called Nietzschean, if its whole conception were not completely unromantic. It does not look forward to the fatal men and women of the next century, who exalt their passions into a doctrine and then use it as an excuse for any sort of misbehaviour, but back to an idea which lies at the very root of classical theory. Descartes claimed that the ability to think and reason was common to all men. Success depended not on some innate superiority, but on the method employed. Curiously enough, French classical literature made no effort to represent a character who followed this Cartesian method. Some of Corneille's heroes and heroines succeed in triumphing over love; but it is in favour of honour, virtue, etc.—in short, the triumph is that of one passion over another. The epigrams of La Rochefoucauld, the plays of Molière and Racine display love as a force against which all struggle is vain. It has become fashionable of late to compare Laclos with Racine. There are a few quotations from *Britannicus* in *Les Liaisons*. And it is true that the book is, as Baudelaire called it, a good example of *analyse racinienne*. But the use of analysis to explain a complicated emotional state is the only thing the two writers have in common. If ever a poet was interested in *femmes à délire* it was Jean Racine. His heroes and heroines are helpless in the grip of their passions. Their unbridled lives seem almost designed to show the powerlessness of the Cartesian method, at least in the field of the emotions. For the use of analysis, which is one of the bases of classical doctrine, implies that the passions can be understood and controlled. It was an implication, however, that nobody before Laclos had thought of developing.

Mme de Merteuil is the first demonstration of how the most popular of all passions, love, can be used as a means of exercising the will. The vocabulary of her letter shows this clearly enough. Words like *volonté, pensée*, *savoir*, *expérience*, *étude*, occur throughout: it is an exposition of intellectual self-sufficiency. Her principles were not the result of accident or habit: "Ils sont les fruits de mes profondes réflexions," she declares, "je les ai créés, et je puis dire que je suis mon ouvrage." What is this but a variation of *Je pense, donc je suis*? Her whole life was a course of self-discipline, intended to purge away whatever was natural or instinctive. As a girl, brought up according to the iron rules of the *ancien régime,* her thoughts only were her own. She was revolted at the idea that this single possession might be taken from her, and learned to defend it by dissimulation. By the time she was fifteen, she was curious about love; but it was a purely intellectual curiosity: "Ma tête seule fermentait: je ne désirais pas de jouir, je voulais savoir." She calls her marriage "an opportunity for experiment": "Douleur et plaisir," she writes of her wedding-night, "j'observai tout exactement, et ne voyais dans ces diverses sensations que des faits à recueillir et à méditer." Later on, after her husband's death, when widowhood had given her a certain freedom, she did not immediately take advantage of it. She retired to the country to continue her course of self-instruction. She studied love; and decided that, like everything else, it could be dominated by the intellect. "En vain m'avait-on dit," she says, "qu'on ne pouvait feindre ce sentiment; je voyais pourtant que, pour y parvenir, il suffisait de joindre à l'esprit d'un auteur le talent d'un comédien." This conclusion explains why, on returning to society, she made love her main interest. She did not choose it because it was the chief pastime of the leisure class into which she was born, but because, owing to the social taboos on sexual licence and the generally accepted idea that passion was irresistible, it was the most difficult and even dangerous of occupations. She wanted an obstacle which would enable her to develop her talents to the utmost; and from the beginning she drew up her programme in this sense. She had no desire to feel love herself, but to "l'inspirer et le feindre." "Je résolus d'employer à mon bonheur ce que tant d'autres sacrifiaient à la vanité."

The precise nature of this *bonheur* explains the "audacity" of *Les Liaisons dangereuses*. During the course of the novel, Mme de Merteuil conducts three love affairs: with Belleroche, with Danceny, and with Prévan. It goes without saying that "love" is not the basis of any of them. But—and here is the crux of the matter—neither is mere sensuality. The affair with Danceny is undertaken to pique Valmont. The two others are simply means of demonstrating her mastery of her senses. "Je ne crois pas avoir jamais mis tant de soin à plaire," she writes after an evening with Belleroche, "ni avoir été jamais aussi contente de moi." In other words, her satisfaction was not the result of pleasure given or received, but of the ability to feign pleasure and all the ecstasies of passion without feeling either. It was the satisfaction of a virtuoso who has given a superb performance. It may be called an entirely classical satisfaction, inasmuch as the classical doctrine, by reflection and analysis, pretends to a control and an understanding of reality which, according to Romantic ideas, can only be gained through direct experience.

Another aspect of the matter appears in the affair with Prévan. Like Valmont, Prévan is a town roué who makes a speciality of difficult conquests. The procedure is relatively simple: undertake the subjugation of some notoriously virtuous woman, and, once successful, relate the adventure and ruin her socially. Since Mme de Merteuil, thanks to her skilful hypocrisy, passes for a paragon of virtue, Prévan selects her as his victim. His project, taking advantage as it does of the vulnerable position of woman in society and of her supposed emotional vulnerability, is a challenge to everything that Mme de Merteuil has achieved. She accepts it in this light. Warned by Valmont of Prévan's intentions, she refuses to seek safety in avoiding him. "Prétendre que je puisse redouter un homme au point de ne plus voir mon salut que dans la fuite: jamais! Il faut vaincre ou périr." Prévan counts from first to last on the social rules, which allow him a liberty of manoeuvre forbidden women. And this is the cause of his downfall. Mme de Merteuil knows the social rules well. She has studied them as she studied love, reading not only novels and plays, but the strictest moralists to learn "ce qu'on pouvait faire, ce qu'on devait penser, et ce qu'il fallait paraître." She has thus acquired a complete understanding of all the levers and pulleys of prohibition; and instead of finding them irksome, she values them as obstacles which prove her strength. They demonstrate her superiority to men like Valmont and Prévan, whom the conventions leave relatively free. "Quand je vous accorderais autant de talents qu'à nous," she explains to Valmont, "de combien encore ne devions nous pas vous surpasser, par la nécessité où nous sommes d'en faire un continuel usage!" Without such difficulties, her success would lose half its meaning. Nor is this all: in manipulating that antiquated machinery, she has learned how to make it serve her. The complications of eighteenth-century etiquette are the snare in which she catches Prévan, and her victory results from observing all the regulations, to which she sticks as scrupulously as an acrobat to his tight-rope. She even complicates them. It would be easy enough to meet Prévan in a little house she has on the outskirts of Paris—if meeting him were all she wanted. But she intends not only to possess him, but also to ruin him. She therefore receives him in her drawing room. It would be a matter of no difficulty whatever to get him up to her boudoir through the garden door; but this would prove her complicity in the adventure. She invents a watch-dog which makes it impossible, and obliges Prévan to compromise himself by entering surreptitiously through the main door while the footmen are not looking. As a result, when he finally sees her alone, it is he, not she, who has transgressed the conventions. She meets him with one hand on the bell-rope, and ends the brief love scene by calling her servants and delivering him over to public obloquy. If the conventional pleasures of love played a very small part in her relations with Danceny and Belleroche, they have no part at all in the Prévan episode. Mme de Merteuil looks on Prévan less as a man than as a problem, whose solution demands the strictest intellectual effort. He represents not only the seductions of love, but the laws of society. Her victory over him has a double aspect: it shows how her emancipation from any sort of emotional control enables her to direct those very social regulations which usually prove fatal to her sex.

She is, in fact, the first emancipated woman: not in the legal sense, but in the intellectual sense—the only kind of emancipation that counts. The very fact that she obeys the conventions makes her inner freedom all the more startling. This is why her resemblances to the Fatal Woman of the next century are entirely superficial. The Fatal Woman is a neurotic, a diabolist, a victim of tainted heredity, etc.; an essentially Romantic character, living outside society, or above it, but never in it, as does Mme de Merteuil. Certain twentieth-century heroines, like Huxley's Lucy Tantamount or Malraux's Valérie Serge, resemble the Marquise a little more. But if, like her, they succeed in divorcing intellect and emotion, they are in every way less vivid characters because they are socially free. They are man's equals, and thus they have no need to be his superiors. They have never had to acquire the strength that Mme de Merteuil gained by wrestling with prohibition. "Croyez-moi, vicomte," as she observes, "on acquiert rarement les qualités dont on peut se passer." There is nothing either decadent or metaphysical about Mme de Merteuil. She lives within the narrow boundaries of the eighteenth-century aristocracy, one of the narrowest circles the world has ever seen: a few hundred equals, a few thousand inferiors, and the drawing rooms of Paris and Versailles. She never questions these limits, never tries to step outside them; it is as if she were unaware that anything existed beyond. And her emotions are equally circumscribed: not once do we find her longing for a new pleasure, an unknown and supreme sensation. In the Voltairean sense, she cultivates her garden. She is cleverer than her contemporaries, but not superhuman. Laclos' audacity in creating such a character was an audacity of method rather than of conception. No such woman had ever been seen before, simply because the classical school, as if by tacit agreement, stopped short at the boundaries of passion, contented itself with noting the dangers of that unknown country, and made no effort to annex it. Laclos alone demonstrated how passion itself could be reduced to order. He deliberately ignored what was really "new" in the literature of 1782: Rousseauistic sentiment, the beginnings of the cult of Nature, the ideas of human perfectibility, etc. He was not interested in discovering a new path, but in exploring the old to its last extreme. Like all extremes, *Les Liaisons dangereuses* marks an end.

If no subsequent heroine really resembles Mme de Merteuil, it is because the Marquise was the last word of a dying theory, not the revelation of a new psychological type. Such a book was necessary if the theory was to attain complete expression; Mme de Merteuil shows the theory incarnated in a personality: she proves, what previous classical types like Alceste or Phèdre had not done, that the human animal can live isolated from all the feelings and impulses which govern humanity, can reject whatever is not dictated by the mind and enforced by the will. Such an outcome was logical—given the premises of the analytical method, which required a lucidity foreign to any kind of ordinary living; it was logical, but it was also disquieting, and much more anarchic than revolutionary, since it suggests nothing new to put in the place of what it dissolves. By isolating pure will—will with no purpose but the exercise of its own power, will as an end in itself, disengaged from any moral or social obligations—Laclos brought into ruthless focus all the latent inhumanity of classicism. Hence the scandal his book caused; hence the agitated letters of Mme Riccoboni and the outcries of Mme de Genlis. Afterwards, there was nothing possible, nothing but a turning back, or else a deliberate flight from the geometric avenues of the great park into the chaotic forest that still flourished on its borders. We can trace just such a flight in the novels of the Marquis de Sade, who was writing in the Bastille at the same time that Laclos composed his masterpiece. The characters of *Justine, La Philosophie dans le boudoir,* etc., live in a lubricious ecstasy which has nothing in common with Mme de Merteuil's intellectualism; everywhere, behind the smokescreen of obscenity, we sense a sort of terror of the abstract, a desperate need to *feel*—immediately and concretely, at whatever cost of horror and excess.

The whole classical movement was an artificial suspension of natural disorder, a heroic isolation of man—his will, his intellect, his reason—from the confusion and neurosis in which he usually founders. Its very essence was audacious, as audacious as the bridge that spans a chasm with a single arch; and audacious too are all its works, from the splendid order of Le Nôtre's gardens to the lyric tension of its great tragedies. But *Les Liaisons dangereuses* is the most audacious of all.

THE THREE WORLDS OF *THE COCKTAIL PARTY*: THE WIT OF T. S. ELIOT

Robert A. Colby

THE Cocktail Party, the first of T. S. Eliot's plays to reach anything approaching a wide audience, is noteworthy for its abandonment of the esoteric, lofty tone of his previous plays. This shift seems consistent with Eliot's growing concern, as revealed in *The Idea of a Christian Society,* with the religion of the hearth, rather than with the religion of the cloister—that mode of Christianity which "the great majority of the people" rather than recluses can practise. In *The Cocktail Party,* therefore, Eliot has endeavoured as before to restore poetic drama to its original religious context, but this time with an unobtrusiveness befitting a non-religious audience. Here he dramatizes a moral issue that arises out of a domestic crisis, and the character who represents the paragon of virtue arises from the same society as do the unregenerates of the play, is completely devoid of any ecclesiastical trappings, is, in fact, completely unaware of her function and influence over others. One of the fascinations of the play is the way in which Christiantity is made relevant and compelling to its characters given over to secular ways of life, and the way in which the poetic imagination is employed to integrate disparate realms of experience.

I

The relationship that Celia's fate is meant to have to the marital crisis involving Edward and Lavinia Chamberlayne has been the crucial question in the interpretation of *The Cocktail Party.* Oddly enough, the ghastly death of Celia has been objected to by critics for diametrically opposed reasons. According to one, it introduces the gruesome into a play that was intended to be a comedy, and in failing to keep Celia's fate in tone with that of Edward and Lavinia, Eliot produces an incongruous effect at his climax.[1] A subsequent criticism of the play raises the objection that since Edward's and Lavinia's choice of ways of life is too trivial by comparison with Celia's, Eliot has failed to realize "the pains and the glories of the non-heroic life."[2]

Eliot, it seems, disappoints one reader because he didn't write a more thorough-going comedy, and another because his play is not

---

[1] William K. Wimsatt, "Eliot's Comedy," *Sewanee Review,* LVIII (October, 1950), 666–7.

[2] Nathan A. Scott, Jr., "T. S. Eliot's 'The Cocktail Party'; Of Redemption and Vocation," *Religion in Life* (Spring, 1951), 283. Scott quotes from Lionel Trilling, "Wordsworth and the Iron Time," *Kenyon Review,* XII (Summer, 1950), 493–4.

Vol. XXIV, no. 1, Oct., 1954

more serious and elevated. But did he intend *The Cocktail Party* to fall into either of these extreme forms? The fact is that whenever Eliot writes about the verse play, he does not distinguish its forms, but tends to describe it simply as "drama." As for his practice, we need only recall *The Waste Land* with its alternation of slang and eloquence, jazz and incantation, to recognize the characteristic mercurialness of Eliot's thought and language. What about the intentional incongruity of his title *Sweeney Agonistes: Fragments of an Aristophanic Melodrama,* in which are fused at once farce, tragedy, comedy and melodrama? He affirmed explicitly in his homage to John Dryden, a fellow craftsman he greatly admired: "Drama is a mixed form; pure magnificence will not carry it through."[3]

Eliot really is not so much interested in isolating forms of the drama and their peculiar emotional effects as he is in the range of sensibility that dramatic poetry in general is capable of awakening. We recall from well-know essays of Eliot's how much he admired the agglutinative power of Donne and Herbert, who "possessed a mechanism of sensibility which could devour any experience."[4] In the poet Marvell he found his great exemplar of wit, "this alliance of levity and seriousness."[5] It is in wit that the abstract and the concrete, the sublime and the worldly, the tragic and the comic, find their point of juxtaposition.

This equilibrium of wit—the balancing of seemingly opposed intellectual and emotional tones—is what Eliot especially emulates in *The Cocktail Party.* Such equipoise enables him to introduce cannibalism into refined society and crucifixion into a drawing room. According to Eliot, true wit, the quality of the mature, sophisticated mind, involves above all "a recognition implicit in the expression of every experience of other kinds of experience which are possible." So the wit revels in surprises, the more astounding the more remote from one another the realms of experience brought together appear to be. Celia, crucified on the anthill, appears to be a perverse intrusion on Eliot's part, until her secular martyrdom is seen to have some bearing on the situation that Edward and Lavinia find themselves in. And Edward's and Lavinia's girding their loins to face their guests as the curtain falls is indeed hardly heroic, but mock-heroic, a standard form of satirical wit of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. But by the equilibrium of wit, a marital crisis and the performance of social obligations in a bourgeois home are weighed in the balance with a suffering and triumph approaching the divine.

The synthesizing process of wit is employed by Eliot particularly to dramatize his conviction that in our contemporary Christian society the specifically religious emotions can no longer be confined within sanctuaries and temples, but "must be a kind of extension and sanctification of the domestic and social emotions."[6] The subtle interfusion and interpenetration of three ethical influences—Home, Society, Church—is, we find, one of the underlying motifs of the play. Domestic relations are staged against a background of social and political conflicts, which in turn are episodes in the grander clash between paganism and Christianity. Hence the lines of action of the drama are made capable of almost infinite extension—temporal, spatial, ideational—so that the ultimate spiritual insights are made relevant to the most ordinary and seemingly trivial of human situations.

---

[3] "John Dryden," *Selected Essays, 1917–32* (New York, 1932), 273.

[4] "The Metaphysical Poets," *ibid.*, 247.

[5] "Andrew Marvell," *ibid.*, 255.

This extension is enhanced of course by Eliot's use of the type of wit play known as ambivalence. The pervasive cocktails of the play, for example, are sublimated in the consultation scene into the sacramental wine of the libation. "Mystery" is a term used by various characters of the play, in relation to Lavinia's disappearance, to the telegrams and invitations that nobody can account for, as well as to the strange behaviour of Sir Henry, while the reader's mind hearkens back to the earlier and profounder meaning of "mystery play." The very selection by Eliot of marriage as the focal theme of the play, with its deep sacramental as well as societal significance, is his most obvious, yet most effective, means of symbolizing the fusion of the divine and the secular in the most basic and elementary of human acts.

II

The central action of *The Cocktail Party* involves the reconciliation of a married couple, on the brink of separation, through a deepening understanding of each another. But, as Eliot has contrived the action, it is necessary that Edward and Lavinia, two non-spiritually minded people, become aware of the relevancy of certain insights, usually associated with formal religion, to their everyday life. These fundamental insights are the conflict of good and evil, the freedom of the will, the illusoriness of the temporal and the material, and the mutual interdependence of humanity. And Celia's essential dramatic function is to show concretely the validity of these intangible truths to the central figures of the drama, who themselves "lack the eyes to see it." Celia in this respect, like Mrs. Moore of Forster's *A Passage to India,* is more an influence on than an active agent in the working out of the fortunes of the main characters. Eliot's own objection to his third act, that it seems more like an epilogue than the conclusion of a drama, seems well taken in that nothing really happens in it to advance the action. However, by the very method of the last act—narration rather than dramatization—Eliot emphasizes that it is visualization rather than perception that is to exert the most powerful effect. Hearing of Celia's fate stimulates Edward and Lavinia mentally rather than physically—towards meditation rather than towards overt action, bearing on the future rather than the present. Eliot might have called this last scene a prologue:

---

[6] *The Idea of a Christian Society* (New York, 1940), 29.

> You will have to live with these memories and make them
> Into something new. Only by acceptance
> Of the past will you alter its meaning.[7]

This final prognosis made by Sir Henry to the reconciled couple emphasizes the theme of renewal or re-making of one's life. As applied to Edward and Lavinia, this signifies an emotional, mental, and spiritual reorientation which must take place in them if their life together is to continue on a sound and permanent basis.

As is brought out in the quarrel scene that climaxes the first act, the crisis in their marriage has been caused by a lack of mutual empathy, a deficiency stemming from the narrowness of their mental vision. Egoism—preoccupation with oneself—is the sin shared by Edward and Lavinia, but it manifests itself in opposite ways in each of them. Edward is the introverted egoist, so engrossed in his own emotional difficulties, his feelings of inadequacy, that he cannot respond sympathetically to the emotional needs of others. His bored politeness to the guests at the cocktail party, his resistance to the friendly efforts of Julia and Alex to make his temporary bachelorhood bearable, bring out his anti-social nature. It is certainly dramatically appropriate that Edward is a lawyer, a member of a profession associated both with a calculative approach to human motives and with emotional callousness.

As Edward has been the introverted egoist (characterizing himself, quite perceptively, as a "prisoner"), so Lavinia has been the extroverted egoist. Her tendency to try to dominate or overshadow others is the burden of Edward's reiterated complaints. Lavinia's delight in bossing servants is indulged even with Edward, who justifiably resents having been treated as a butler at her "amateur Thursdays." The observant Edward sees too that Celia was invited by Lavinia to advance her own social position, and that Peter's role was simply "to be one of Lavinia's discoveries" (Act I, Scene 1). What Edward fails to perceive is that Lavinia's social gatherings have been her means of ego gratification, denied to her in marriage. But, as Eliot has declared

[7] All quotations from *The Cocktail Party* are from the text of the first American edition (New York, 1950).

in another place and context, ". . . no man is good enough to have the right to make another over in his image"; such efforts lead to "the repression and distortion, rather than the improvement of the personality."[8] Edward and Lavinia both have been guilty of violating the sacredness of the individual.

Julia and Alex intrude upon the Chamberlaynes' private worlds as representatives of society and politics. Celia, poet and visionary, introduces them to a larger world still, antedating and extending beyond the man-made state. This gradual enlargement of the context of Edward's and Lavinia's domestic altercations really symbolizes the enlargement of vision resulting from the moral reorientation that is taking place in them as the play progresses.

To represent the mental state of the principal characters at the outset, the diction, thought, characterization, and action of the early portions of *The Cocktail Party* reflect distortions of reality based upon shallowness of vision or constricted views of life. Celia regards her life in society as a "dream"; Lavinia tries to shine in the artificial glitter of teas and aesthetic salons; Peter's life is bound up with the fantasy world of the cinema; Edward is lost in regrets over the unrecapturable past. This is the state described by Sir Henry as

> the final desolation
> Of solitude in the phantasmal world
> Of imagination, shuffling memories and desires (Act II)

—the state he promises Celia escape from in the "sanatorium."

Mental confusion is suggested from the very outset in the opening conversations, dominated by Julia and Alex, with their mixed-up narratives, unconfirmed rumours. Deception—another form of distortion of reality—is also hinted at by Lavinia's unaccounted-for disappearance, Edward's attempts to keep up appearances in her absence, the presence of Sir Henry as the still Unidentified Guest, Julia's references to Edward's "secrets." These various means of suspense by which Eliot manages to "keep the bloody audience's attention engaged" and arouses the "constant expectation that something is going to happen" grow out of corresponding bewilderments, concealments, and ignorance of the characters on the stage.[9]

[8] "Unity and Diversity: The Region," *Notes towards a Definition of Culture* (New York, 1949), 64–5. Eliot here has been drawing an analogy between cultural tyranny (such as that exercised by the British over India) and marital tyranny, a further instance of his propensity to equate domestic and political situations. William Arrowsmith has called attention to this anticipation of the theme of *The Cocktail Party* in his most illuminating article on the play in *Hudson Review,* III (Autumn, 1950), 423.

[9] The quoted phrases are taken respectively from "Five Points on Dramatic Writing," his letter to Ezra Pound reproduced in *Townsman,* I (July, 1938), 10; *Poetry and Drama* (Cambridge, 1951), 38–9.

The audience does not like to be "left with a mystery" any more than does Edward, who realizes that the mere return of Lavinia will not clear up the mystery they are involved in. As he confides to Sir Henry: "I must find out *who she is, to find out who I am*" (Act I, Scene 1; italics mine). Sir Henry, who offers himself at this point as an aid to Edward, is Eliot's prototype of the scientist-philosopher that he feels the present world so greatly needs.[10] His function is to rescue the egocentric individual from "the sway of his prejudices, his social background, his individual tastes," the ideal end of self-understanding for Eliot.[11] Gentleman-doctor-sage, Sir Henry Harcourt-Reilly is particularly qualified to serve as intermediary among the worlds that criss-cross through *The Cocktail Party,* including that of its most tormented soul.

III

Celia Coplestone is most clearly differentiated from the Chamberlaynes and Peter Quilpe in her largeness of vision and altruism. Her companionship with Peter, her infatuation for Edward, her service to the natives of Kinkanja, are alike prompted by her instinctive sympathy for the lonely and abandoned, for the sick in spirit as with Peter and Edward—or in body, as with the natives. "I thought he had talent; I saw that he was lonely; I thought that I could help him . . . ," she recalls when accounting to Edward for her previous interest in Peter (Act I, Scene 2). But she came to regard Peter as "less interesting" as she observed that he was "rather conceited." The same compassionate spirit asserts itself towards Edward when she learns that he is going to take Lavinia back after she has walked out on him: "But what will your life be? I cannot bear to think of it." However, Edward too disappoints Celia because of his egocentrism. But she finds in him more serious deficiencies—passivity and insensitivity, as well as despair proceeding from fatalism. Celia "aspires," rather than resign herself to the narrow life about her. But her discontent stems not from a sense of mere personal inadequacy, as with Edward, but from "failure Towards someone, or something, outside of myself," as she confesses to Sir Henry in the consultation scene.

Lavinia and Celia—estranged wife and "other" woman in the

---

[10] See "Catholicism and International Order," *Essays Ancient and Modern* (London, 1936), 117.

[11] *Ibid.*, 115. Obviously Sir Henry was intended as an ideal opposed to what Eliot regarded as the more typical members of his profession: "And it is unfortunate that so many eminent psychologists of our day have been either indifferent or hostile to Christianity; and that they have deliberately tried to do without it." "The Search for Moral Sanction," *The Listener,* March 30, 1932, pp. 445–6. See also his review of Freud's *The Future of an Illusion, Criterion,* VIII (December, 1928), 350–3.

Chamberlayne marital crisis—meet only once during the entire play, at the end of the first cocktail party. At the second "cocktail party"—the consultation in Sir Henry's office—they are both "sent off" by the blessing over the sacramental wine, but neither ever knows of the visit of the other. At the final cocktail party, Celia has been sublimated, as it were, appearing at the Chamberlaynes only as a spiritual presence. The one meeting between Celia and Lavinia is brief, but in a few telling strokes the contrasting characters of the two women are brought out.

They are brought together when Celia happens to be in the Chamberlayne apartment upon Lavinia's return (Act I, Scene 3). This is one of the several contrived coincidences by which Sir Henry along with his aides Julia and Alex, the secularized Fates of this drama, manipulate the destines of the protagonists. The circumstances of the meeting are particularly embarrassing, each of the women being in a similar ticklish situation. Lavinia's return to Edward deprives Celia of the man she has loved; Celia appears to Lavinia to be running off with Peter, Lavinia's lover. Each reacts characteristically. When Lavinia learns that Peter is going away, she betrays her jealousy of Celia at every opening. Celia, faced with a similar situation, betrays no jealousy: "I should like you to remember me As someone who wants you and Edward to be happy." When they are parting company, Celia wishes them to "say goodbye as friends." Here too Lavinia cannot help betraying her wounded vanity. She replies that they have always been friends "At least, in so far as a girl *can* be a friend Of a woman so much older than herself." There is an insinuating note of self-pity in Lavinia's remark, accompanied by a twist of the knife, as Lavinia slyly suggests why Celia is able to take Peter away from her. Brief as this episode is, it remains deeply enough etched in Lavinia's mind for her to declare two years later: "I shall go on seeing her at the moment When she said good-bye to us . . ." (Act III). But now, in her unregenerate state, Lavinia reassures Celia that somehow she and Edward will get along just as they have in the past. Here, Celia exclaims significantly, "Oh, not as in the past!" And that is the crux of their marital problem: Edward and Lavinia have to overcome the past, to re-make themselves, if there is to be a favourable answer to Celia's anguished question: "Oh, Edward! Can you be happy with Lavinia?" (Act I, Scene 2). If this transformation is to take place, they must be freed from the confines of time and space, from their preoccupation with the transitory, in order to grasp what is permanent and real in life.

IV

Recognition of the freedom of the will is certainly imperative for Edward and Lavinia if they are to re-make themselves. The strange diverseness of Julia and Alex, the two characters of the drama who are most perplexing, seems to have been intended by Eliot to bring out the multi-valence of human character itself. In Act I Julia seems scatter-brained and silly; Alex seems shallow and dilettantish. In Act II they emerge suddenly as serious and devout, one of the dramatic surprises of the play (their connection with Sir Henry being hinted at, yet concealed in Act I). In Act III, Alex, the returned diplomat, has the dramatic role of *nuntius,* delicately balancing the serious and absurd in his account of Celia's death. His digression on monkeys, in which his lambent mind darts by rapid association from pagan religion to culinary delights to the complications of international politics and then finally to the horror of Celia's martyrdom, is surely one of the most spine-tingling plays of wit of the whole drama. Likewise, Julia, who in Act I was "that dreadful old woman" to Edward, in Act III impresses him with the depth of her mind, when, in the midst of her deceptive insouciance, she interprets the experience that they have all shared. By recognizing the range and amplitude of their characters, by seeing them apparently transformed before their very eyes, an audience is prepared for the possibility of the Chamberlaynes' effecting some kind of metamorphosis. Similarly with Sir Henry's Janus-like temperament. When occasion calls for it, he can give forth with a bawdy R.A.F. ballad, punning on his name ("Toory-ooly toory-iley, What's the matter with One Eyed Riley?"—Act I, Scene 1) and yet in more serious moods intone a prayer (end of Act II) and even rise to the sublimity of a mystic poem (Act III). He can banter about the joys of bachelorhood with Edward, and yet subsequently remind him of his obligations to Lavinia and to his fellow human beings in general. This sense of the diverseness of the human mind and character is fundamental to our acceptance of that truth which Edward grasps in the climactic scene: ". . . every moment is a fresh beginning. . . ."

V

Two years elapse before the last of the cocktail parties, which does not, however, take place before our eyes. It is only about to begin. So also, we may understand, is life beginning anew for the Chamberlaynes. When we first looked in on them, a cocktail party was just ending, and Lavinia had temporarily disappeared—that is, one phase of their life was ending. The party guests were tipsy, befitting their mental and moral confusion. At the second cocktail party—the libation in Sir Henry's chambers—the sober drinkers lift glasses in hope and well-wishing. The outcome of these prayers is not yet known, either for the "traveller" or for the "builders of the hearth." But by the time Henry and Lavinia are ready to face their new guests, they have had a shock more potent than the kick of whiskey or gin, which may make them sadder and perhaps wiser hosts. This time it is Celia who is missing rather than Lavinia. What is this reverse time scheme (end to beginning) superimposed upon the forward progression of the play but one of Eliot's dramatic means for suggesting the illusoriness of temporality, even in this secular world? Edward and Lavinia are gradually made to understand in their groping way that they are not bound by the past, but by "acceptance" of it can "alter its meaning." And in their recognition that Celia still dwells among them as an "image" Edward and Lavinia grasp a kind of supersensory existence that, momentarily at least, frees them from their confinement to the material realm of experience.

"It is to start a train of events beyond your control . . . ," Sir Henry had warned Edward (Act I, Scene 1). Within two years, Edward's decision to take Lavinia back has had repercussions throughout the world—to the West in California, where Peter goes; to the East in the remote little island of Kinkanja, where Celia dies. The extensive effect of this decision—temporally and spatially—helps to extend the vision of Edward and Lavinia by awakening them to a sense of their part in the entire human comedy.

As a focus of so many currents of influence—the supernatural on the secular, primitivism on civilization, religion and society on domestic life—the drawing room of the Chamberlaynes becomes, in the culminating episodes of the play, a kind of cosmopolitan nerve centre. With the convergence of religious and political issues upon the apparently simple situation of Edward and Lavinia, especially wide amplitude is provided for the play of wit—the amplification of the trivial and the mundane, the juxtaposition of the serious and the absurd, the rapid transition from one plane of existence to another.

One deceptively trivial scene is the conversation between Edward and Lavinia that opens the last act. Why do the husband and wife have a scene alone together before their friends arrive, and especially before they hear Alex's report from Kinkanja? If the plot involves simply their reconciliation, it appears to have been achieved at this point. There have been several cocktail parties during the interim, and Lavinia has not run away from any of them. Of more importance is the evidence of the breaking down of their egocentric tendencies.

Lavinia is not so officious as formerly in her orders to the caterer's assistant, and she shows a less patronizing consideration for Edward. Edward, it is to be noted, has acquired a bit of gallantry in his compliment on Lavinia's dress, and in his conceding to her superior practical sense in social matters. However, both, reconciled as they appear to be to each other, are not as yet quite adjusted to their role in society. This being their last party of the season, they are looking forward to withdrawal to their "remote" country house. Lavinia seems ready for quiet domesticity, having apparently given up her ambitions to shine in the salon, the source of her former frustrations and disappointments. Edward's latent anti-socialness emerges once more as he looks forward to an "excuse for not seeing people." The underlying significance of these seemingly innocuous vacation plans makes the subsequent news of Celia's death of particular moment to the Chamberlaynes. Their retreat to the country represents in their world the attempt to escape obligation to and responsibility for fellow human beings. What they learn from Celia's destiny is that one is never, even in the most barren stretches of the earth, removed from obligation to others, and that a proper sense of responsibility may make one capable of enduring the utmost personal inconvenience.

"But if this was right—if this was right for Celia—" Edward exclaims, as Sir Henry tries to convince him that Celia's crucifixion near the ant hill was a "happy death"—"There must be something else that is terribly wrong, And the rest of us are somehow involved in the wrong." This is all that the Christian of the hearth need know about original sin. This sense of participation in the sin of mankind has been felt as an intimation by Celia in Sir Henry's consultation chamber, while Edward and Lavinia were preoccupied with their private troubles. Lavinia's significant reaction: "Oh, Edward, I knew! I knew what you were thinking!" though characteristic of her usual propensity to read his mind, here indicates something new—a rising empathy. Her "Doesn't it help that I feel guilty too?" reveals a psychic bond heretofore missing from their marriage: an emotional experience that they share. The simultaneous recognition by both that they have had a part in Celia's fate is a crucial step in their reorientation from their solitary egocentrism towards sympathy with the entire "human condition."

It is a dramatic necessity that Peter be present to complete the group of those whose thwarting of Celia's altruistic impulses helped send her on her way to Kinkanja, and he happens on the scene by that combination of happy chance and shrewd manipulation that seems to govern the fortunes of these people. Through Peter's return, Lavinia in a measure rights the wrong she has done to Celia. In the previous scene involving Peter, we recall, she saw Celia as a rival spiriting off her lover. She now tries to reunite Peter and Celia through that real, though intangible, bond of understanding that had been so painfully lacking in their tangled, frustrated lives. Peter, she urges, can like her and Edward begin life over, free of illusion. Peter is not quite regenerated; he is baffled by the talk about "new beginning" and "natural good," but in a flash occurs to him the same truth that had already struck Edward and Lavinia: "I've only been interested in myself: And that isn't good enough for Celia." In his dim way Peter too is beginning to grasp "the final desolation of solitude" alluded to before by Sir Henry.

The three are now brought to realize that they, like the heathens of Kinkanja, have been persecutors of Celia. Lavinia's words to Sir Henry after he has revealed his premonition of Celia's death: "Perhaps she had been through greater agony beforehand," indicates the dawning sense in her that there is greater suffering than physical pain or death. Edward's rejection, Lavinia's "spite," Peter's "forgetting" are the highly refined forms of cruelty practised by the civilized. These are the varieties of misunderstandings—resulting from egocentrism—that caused Celia spiritual agony.

Just as the heathens of Kinkanja committed their atrocity out of superstition—the attributing of power and influence to inferior kinds of being, the worship of the trivial—the guests of the cocktail party have been immersed in their form of "monkey" worship—materialism. The British authorities who failed to forestall the native insurrection, and thereby indirectly made possible Celia's crucifixion, subordinated ethics to political opportunism. In the smaller world of London's upper middle class, ethics is circumscribed by social conventions and egoistic preoccupations—for Edward social approval, for Lavinia social recognition, for Peter social success. It takes the elemental, primitive horror of the Kinkanja uprising and Celia's self-abnegation to arouse in all of them a sense of collective guilt and collective responsibility—of an ethos which involves alike the savage and the civilized man, the East and the West, the Christian of the cloister and the Christian of the hearth.

For the present, Edward and Lavinia seem to have reached the basic insight pertaining to their situation—that understanding arises out of mutual sympathy stimulated by mutual participation in suffering. Celia has enabled them to visualize suffering that results in triumph because it is inspired by love. As Eliot has affirmed in *The Idea of a Christian Society,* "We need to know how to see the world as the Christian Fathers saw it, and the purpose of reascending to origins is that we should be able to return, with greater spiritual knowledge to our own situation."[12] In Kinkanja has been re-enacted for the Christian of the hearth the ancient clash of the flesh and the spirit, of Caesar and God, of vanity and altruism, in a modern social and political situation—and in their starkest, rawest manifestations.

But the transcendental vision they have is necessarily momentary. The cyclical time scheme of the drama reflects the "return . . . to our own situation," presumably with greater insight. So too does the scheme of character relationships. At first the four lovers are involved in an arc-like relationship (Lavinia loves Peter, who loves Celia, who loves Edward, who does not love Lavinia or Celia or anybody)—Lavinia, outgoing, but "unlovable," Edward, indrawn and "unloving," at the open ends for opposite reasons. With the reconciliation of Edward and Lavinia, the arc is closed into a circle, symbolizing their involvement with humanity.[13] Much of the expression of the play also is circular, the paradox indulged in so frequently by Sir Henry, for example, which seems just the figure of thought to suggest the derangement of mind and its consequent reorientation that the principals of the play are experiencing:

> There is certainly no purpose in remaining in the dark
> Except long enough to clear from the mind
> The illusion of having ever been in the light (Act I, Scene 1)
>
> Disillusion can become itself an illusion
> If we rest in it (Act II)
>
> As for Miss Coplestone, because you think her death was waste
> You blame yourselves, and because you blame yourselves
> You think her life was wasted. (Act III)

All the elements at the disposal of the dramatist—plot, character, thought, diction—have been co-ordinated by Eliot to represent the disruption of "normal" relations, followed by their restoration, maladjustment, and readjustment—psychological and spiritual.

By the very blandness of the conclusion of his play, Eliot seems to show us how the three elements that make up his ideal Christian society—the Community of Christians, the Christian State, the Christian Community—divide off. From only the first of these, made up of the devout who have withdrawn themselves from ordinary society, would one, according to Eliot, "expect a conscious Christian life on its highest social level." Celia has obviously become one of these. Among the second group, those in positions of influence and power in the everyday world, "you would have as a minimum conscious conformity of behavior." In their respective spheres—the clinic, the embassy, the salon—Sir Henry, Alex, and Julia represent this class, and their ministrations and prayers show their conscious awareness of Christian obligation. As for the vast majority, the Christian Community, to which Edward, Lavinia, and Peter belong, in them, writes Eliot, "the Christian faith would be ingrained, but it requires, as a minimum, *only a largely unconscious behavior*."[14] Peter had declared earlier about Celia: "If I can only hold to the memory I can bear any future . . ." (Act I, Scene 1). As he dashes out, presumably to return to his mad Hollywood world, Lavinia hopes that he will come back "to talk about Celia," which he promises to do. As Edward and Lavinia prepare to face another onslaught of guests, Lavinia displays the same peevishness about Edward's obtuseness as she had before, but this time with a difference. When Edward protests that he had already admired Lavinia's dress earlier in the evening, her significant reply is: "But so much has happened since then." As Edward and Lavinia have been but passive listeners since then, the events she speaks of obviously are internal, effects on the mind and conscience. Moreover, Lavinia has been unconsciously impressed with the idea of the relativity of time. Edward had groped towards this idea a little earlier, in his pragmatic way:

---

[12] *The Idea of a Christian Society*, chap. IV, 63.

[13] If any fault is to be found with *The Cocktail Party* as a play it is with its execution rather than with its conception, in my opinion. Because Peter hardly pulls his weight as a personality and because Celia is more talked about than acting, they fail to impress themselves upon our minds and memories as vividly as do Edward and Lavinia. This makes it necessary to call attention to the double love plot that Eliot conceived for the play.

> Oh, it isn't much
> That I understand yet! But Sir Henry has been saying,
> I think, that every moment is a fresh beginning;
> And Julia, that life is only keeping on;
> And somehow, the two ideas seem to fit together.

The mystical concepts of resurrection and the immortality of the soul have been translated into terms dimly comprehensible by the Christian of the hearth. Before they face their new guests, then, the Chamberlaynes come to realize that one's character is constantly in process of formation and that the direction of one's life is never fully determined. Thus Lavinia's final line, "It's begun," referring to the imminent party, has implications beyond this occasion.

As the domestic conflict of Edward and Lavinia has been enlarged in context to relate to grander political and spiritual conflicts, so the "cocktail party" itself comes to stand synechdochically for all human relations and obligations, from which Edward and Lavinia had previously sought to escape. It was, after all, at previous cocktail parties that a whole range of human vices and virtues had been previously displayed. We are thus led to realize, along with the characters of the drama, that on occasions sacred or profane, whether we are engaged in pleasure or in the serious business of life, we are constantly involved in a moral trial. Eliot considered Dryden best not in his heroic dramas, but "when dealing with situations that do not demand great emotional concentration; when his situation is more trivial, and he can practice his art of making the small great."[15] In *The Cocktail Party*, Eliot not only makes the small great, but also the great small; his wit is telescopic and microscopic at once. The remote and transcendental is made immediate and local (Celia's martyrdom is related to the pain and self-abnegation we all endure), while the immediate and local is amplified into the cosmic (the successful entertainment of guests at a cocktail party becomes a human mode of divine charity).

---

[14] *The Idea of a Christian Society*, 27; italics mine.

So, as Edward and Lavinia prepare to face their new guests, renewed opportunity awaits them to practise the Christian virtues not as ritualists or as regular worshippers, but at least in the "unconscious" way, ingrained as habit, that Eliot has concluded is the only way now feasible for the average man and woman of the twentieth-century Christian Community. At this time he might have put into the mouths of Edward and Lavinia his own words from the *Four Quartets*:

> We had the experience, but missed the meaning,
> And approach to the meaning restores the experience
> In a different form.

[15] "John Dryden," 272.

IRELAND AND THE TWELFTH-CENTURY RENAISSANCE[1]

Charles W. Dunn

STUDENTS of Western civilization will always remain indebted to Charles Homer Haskins for his remarkable study, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century*, not merely because it reached conclusions about the development of European culture that were new when the book was published in 1927 but also because it raised fresh questions that still remain unanswered today. One particularly significant question, briefly stated, is this. Haskins showed that there was a widespread revival of interest in classical culture, especially that portion of it available through Latin. What happened, however, to the *native* traditions and the *vernacular* literatures of the West in the twelfth century? For France or Germany scholars have supplied material ample to provide a detailed and intelligible answer; but for the British Isles or—to use a more inclusive and less misleading medieval name—the Western Corner, much important work still remains to be done.

From this period have been preserved the literary remains of no less than seven different ethnic cultures—Welsh, Cornish, Gaelic, English, Anglo-Norman, Jewish, and Norse. Each group perpetuated its own traditions and produced its own literature either in the native language or in Latin. Can any or all of these be said to have shared in a renaissance? To this question, it would still be premature to reply. First, we require an adequate inventory and appraisal of the literature produced by each, and then a comparative investigation of their individual sources and of their mutual affiliations.

What I can offer here will certainly not provide an answer, for I merely present a tentative survey of the literary activity of the Irish in the twelfth century.

I

In the twelfth century Ireland was popularly known both at home and abroad as the "Island of Saints," in part because of the great reputation of her early missionaries such as St. Columba of Iona or St. Columbanus of Bobbio, in part because of the marvels with which her hagiographers had endowed the lives of her early saints such as Adamnan or Brendan, both of whom were widely known throughout Europe in the twelfth century as the heroes of otherworld journeys.

---

[1] Part of this paper was read before the Mediaeval Society of the University of Toronto on February 18, 1954, and the whole was revised in the light of the useful comments made by members. The paper was read as a public lecture at the University of Chicago on March 3, 1954. I have here condensed bibliographical references as far as possible and have not given any proof of the dating or authorship of the documents mentioned, since I intend to expand the material into a book. The references to Irish originals in all cases also lead to translations; the wording of the translated passages quoted here, however, is my own. I am particularly indebted to Mr. Pádraig O Broin for his helpful advice.

But the Irish and their critics from abroad were conscious that the ecclesiasts of the twelfth century were no longer like the famous saints to whom the island had given birth before the disastrous Norse invasions of the ninth and tenth centuries. In a vigorously puritanic poem a contemporary Irish cleric shows his awareness of a decline and does not seem to see any hope for improvement:

Those venerable who did God's will
  At time's onset,
Needy, naked, sore, and filthy,
  Not fat of belly they.

Men of learning keen,
  They served the King of the Sun. . . .

Hereafter there will come
  The venerable of the latter world,
With plunder, cattle, mitres,
  With rings, and chessboards,

With silk, sarsanet, satin,
  On soft couches after drinking,
With contempt for dear God's wisdom,
  Held fast by the Devil.[2]

And there were others, especially Malachy of Armagh, who, though less pessimistic in their criticism, insisted upon the necessity of reforming the idiosyncratic structure of the church in Ireland so that the independent monastic communities ruled by hereditary non-celibate abbots would become subordinate to bishops and archbishops as elsewhere in the Christian world.

The Irish monastic church, prior to Malachy's reformation, may have had its faults—they seemed so grave to Bernard of Clairvaux that he called the Irish "Christians in name, but pagans in fact," and Giraldus Cambrensis called them much worse than that; but actually its hereditary character suited it ideally to the role of custodian of Irish religious and secular culture. To it the twelfth century undoubtedly owed the preservation of many of the written and unwritten traditions of Ireland's past. And in this respect the reformed churchmen in the latter part of the twelfth century do not seem to have differed from their predecessors, for they too were willing to perpetuate a mixed secular and religious culture. Under monastic and reformed clerics alike, the great cultural centres such as Clonmacnois, Armagh, Kildare, and Kells appointed professors (*fir légind*, "men of reading") for students, who evidently gathered there just as they gathered elsewhere in Western Europe at the monastic and cathedral schools and other incipient universities in this period.

---

[2] *Lives of the Saints from the Book of Lismore*, ed. Whitley Stokes ("Anecdota Oxoniensia," Oxford, 1890), 135–6; translated in Kenneth Jackson's *Celtic Miscellany* (Cambridge, Mass., 1951), 222–3.

In the twelfth century, however, Ireland was called not only the "Island of Saints" but also the "Island of Kings"; and some, at least, of her kings must have played a part in encouraging literature. Besides the numerous petty rulers who bore the title of king, each of the five provinces had a king. During the century, moreover, the High Kingship of Ireland was held in turn by Murtough O'Brian of Thomond (1086–1119), Turlough O'Connor of Connaught (1119–56), Murtough MacLachlainn of Tyrone (1156–66), and finally by Rory O'Connor of Connaught (1166–75). Though all four High Kings ruled "with opposition," as the sinister Irish phrase has it, they did succeed in upholding something of the legendary grandeur of the ancient national Kings of Tara. Only in 1175, when as the result of the Norman invasions Rory O'Connor became a sort of viceroy under Henry II of England, did the title of High King lose its meaning; but then the provincial kingships became temporarily more important than before.

To all rulers, great or small, the ministrations of the poet (*fili*) and the master of learning (*ollamh*) were considered indispensable; these *literati*, many of whom inherited their position and acquired their learning from their fathers, were virtually ministers of state; they could recite orally the genealogies of the ruling families, and the traditions, customs, and laws of the land, and thus they gave effective sanction to the powers assumed by the ruler.

According to some historians these secular men of learning were trained in so-called bardic schools; in the twelfth century, however, I suspect that these schools were not independent institutions but were, for the most part, associated with those monasteries where secular traditions flourished.

Thus Rory O'Connor, while still High King of Ireland, in 1169 "gave ten cows each year from himself and from every other king after him till doomsday to the Professor (*fer légind*) of Armagh, in honour of Patrick, to give lectures to students of Ireland and Scotland."[3] And, almost certainly, the lectures delivered in Rory's lifetime were not exclusively, if at all, theological.

---

[3] Quoted in James F. Kenney's invaluable *Sources for the Early History of Ireland* ("Records of Civilization," New York, 1929), 11. Kenney supplies copious information about the majority of the ecclesiastical documents referred to here.

II

What then were the literary activities in Ireland during this period? A survey of such materials as can be dated seems to me to suggest the emergence in the eleventh century of a considerable number of composers whose main interest lay in assembling and reworking traditional materials, followed by the appearance in the twelfth century of new authors possessing a greater refinement in taste and literary sense of form, authors whose works were of distinct literary merit.

If we turn, first, to a survey of the work of twelfth-century scribes rather than authors, we are inevitably impressed by an outstanding revival of activity in the collection of religious and secular material, both ancient and modern, into manuscript miscellanies, or one-volume libraries, to use a more descriptive phrase.

To the monastic *scriptoria* of this period we owe three of the most comprehensive Irish codices extant. One is the *Book of the Dun Cow*, in the compilation of which three different scribes worked. At least half of the volume has been lost; but the first scribe copied out sixteen of the surviving pages, probably around the beginning of the twelfth century, at Clonmacnois; the second scribe, Maelmuire by name, continued the transcription, adding another eighty of the surviving pages. And it is of some importance for our understanding of the Irish literary tradition to notice that the ancestry of this second scribe, Maelmuire, can be traced directly back for three hundred years through a long line of non-celibate ecclesiasts—a bishop, an anchorite, a confessor, a bishop, a superior, an anchorite, an abbot—to Abbot Torbach of Armagh (who died in 808), himself a scribe and lector, who had been responsible for the preparation of the *Book of Armagh*—one of Ireland's most important pre-Viking manuscripts.

The appraising eye with which the contents of the *Book of the Dun Cow* were read after Maelmuire's death in 1106 is proved by the revisions which the third scribe wrought in it. Unfortunately for our knowledge of the twelfth century, it is impossible to specify whether this ardent connoisseur of both secular and religious literature made his contribution before the end of the century or later in the thirteenth century. Whenever he knew a version superior to that already recorded in the manuscript he inserted it. In all he contributed 37 pages, often making way for his insertions by such diligent rubbing and scraping of the previous scribes' work that he left holes in the vellum.

The same busy revising hand appears in another important codex, in all probability also compiled at Clonmacnois. Like the *Book of the Dun Cow*, this volume, *Rawlinson Codex B 502*, is fragmentary. It contains three sections of different age, the largest of which consists of 140 pages and was compiled in the 1120's.

Some forty years later Aed mac Crimthainn, the Abbot of Terryglass, compiled a much more voluminous codex, now known as the *Book of Leinster*. He was responsible for filling at least 376 of the extant pages with a wealth of prose and poetry; and it evidently once contained other pages now lost.

From a personal letter written to him in the margin of the manuscript we gain a brief but informative glimpse of the abbot's literary liaisons. Besides being an abbot, Aed is also, we learn, the "Chief Historian of Leinster" and the "Professor of Literature" to the notorious Dermot MacMurrough, King of Leinster, who, though he later brought Strongbow to Ireland, showed himself at times a friend to the Irish church and to Irish learning. And the abbot's friend who wrote the letter is Bishop Find of Kildare, to whom Aed had evidently sent the still unfinished codex for consultation. The Bishop is an ideal literary correspondent. He inquires about the ending to an incomplete tale in the manuscript; he requests a copy of the compositions of Fland Mac Lonain, a ninth-century poet; and he hails his friend in a quatrain which has been gracefully translated by Robin Flower:

Be sure of this, keen-witted Aed,
   Rich in the holy wealth of song,
Be thou long time or short away,
   I always for thy coming long.[4]

The Bishop's especial interest in literature indicates the spirit of the age. If we look for exclusively religious manuscripts in this period, they do not seem to reflect the same vigorous productivity. There is, for instance, the *Four Gospels* in Latin written out from the Vulgate with commentary at Armagh in 1138 by Maelbrigte, who lavished considerable calligraphic skill on the undertaking and, by way of drawing attention to his capability, inserted a tiny slip of vellum in the volume on which he proudly wrote (in Irish), in the most microscopic hand, "If I had wished, I could have written the whole commentary like this."[5] But neither his dextrous lettering nor the paintings of the Lion of St. Mark and the Ox of St. John with which the volume is adorned recall in any way the departed grandeur of the pre-Viking age, the age which left as its monument the *Book of Kells*.

---

[4] Robin Flower, *The Irish Tradition* (Oxford, 1947), 67.

[5] Robin Flower, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London, 1926), II, 431.

III

It is clear, at all events, that Ireland shared with the rest of Europe in the twelfth century one element necessary to a renaissance, namely, literary patrons and foster-parents. But what of the literature itself produced in this era? Much that was committed to writing has perhaps been lost; and much may also have been lost because it never was committed to writing, for at times in the twelfth century literary men, even though writing for a courtly or learned audience, *composed* rather than *wrote* their works in the expectation that they would be transmitted by oral tradition. Sometimes the surviving record is obviously a sort of prompt copy to remind the trained narrator of the complete work; the first line of a poem is given, for instance, with the phrase *et cetera* following; or the work is recorded in full but with an appended prayer "for him who will learn this work and will recite it." Here all we can do is to make a brief appraisal of a few of the representative works extant.

Some of the truly typical products of the twelfth century are now hard to appraise, for their literary mode is completely alien to modern readers. The *Book of Conquests*, for instance, satisfies the Irish craving for genealogy by tracing the tribes who settled in Ireland back either to Celtic mythological origins or through biblical lineages back to Noah. There is scarcely much occasion for the display of narrative style, and the tightly knit stanzas of poetry with which the prose is interspersed consist, all too often for the modern reader, of an uninspired enumeration of names.

Consider, for instance, the poem by the twelfth-century poet, Tanaidhe O'Mulconry, inserted in the section of the *Book of Conquests* dealing with the band of settlers known as the Fir Bolg. It begins:

> The Fir Bolg were here a while
> In the great island of the sons of Mil;
> Five chiefs there were brought with them here—
> I have knowledge of their names.[6]

And what follows is, in fact, nothing more than a catalogue of names which despite its metrical ingenuity reaches a level little higher than that of the unpretentious verses by which schoolboys, before the advent of Progressive Education, used to recall the kings of England.

The great twelfth-century collection of *Poems on the Names of Places* (*Dindshenchas*), on the other hand, caters to the same interest;

[6] *Lebor Gabála Érenn: The Book of the Taking of Ireland*, ed. R. A. S. Macalister, IV (Dublin, Irish Texts Society, 1941), 46–52.

the many poems of varied age and origin all deal with legendary and historical events associated with famous places; but some of the poems convey a real fervour and rich suggestiveness even to the reader of a later age. Consider, for example, the following stanzas about the Tree of Tortu, which was reputed to have fallen in the seventh century after having served as a tribal gathering-place for centuries. The poet reports the reflections of those contemporary with its fall:

Fallen is the Tree of Tortu,
  Whose fringes conquered many a storm. . . .

Tree of Tortu, deep its sound
  In the storm's fierce torment;
Many a shower of leaves has fallen here
  In the moaning wind of winter-nights. . . .

Though now, old crone, you're breaking faggots
  From its limbs for your hearth,
Yet many are the handsome youths
  That have slept beneath its bright branches. . . .

To each thing there comes decay,
  All men in the world pass to death;
They are red earth and crumbling clay,
  All those that gathered round the Tree.[7]

Such works have perhaps more anthropological significance than literary. But Ireland also produced works which can justly be described as pure literature, catering as they do, primarily, to the imagination and the spirit of wonder and delight. (Indeed, it has perhaps always been Ireland's chief literary role to minister not so much to the reason as to the imagination.)

In our search for renaissance it is particularly significant, then, to notice that, within the realm of narrative, the great legend of the *Cattle Raid of Cooley*, which embodied several ancient traditions, reached the peak of its literary development in the first quarter of the twelfth century under the hands of the author referred to by the unromantic title "Redactor C" bestowed upon him by Celticists.[8] His distinctive style is characterized by a deliberate archaism of language, an exuberance of description, and an imposition of narrative logic and consistent characterization upon the confused wealth of traditional material which Ireland had inherited from the pre-Viking age.

It is the Redactor's version of the *Cattle Raid of Cooley* which the Abbot of Terryglass astutely chose to include in the *Book of Leinster*, where it occupies 51 pages. This redaction might be described as the closest approach to the epic achieved in Ireland, but it is far removed in theme, tone, and form from any European epic. The conflict is between Connaught and Ulster. The cause is a "pillow-conversation," as the Redactor calls it, between King Ailill of Connaught and the imperious Queen Medb. The trouble begins in a most realistic manner with an ill-chosen proverb addressed by the complacent Ailill to his wife.

---

[7] *The Metrical Dindshenchas*, ed. Edward Gwynn, pt. IV (Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, 1924), 240–7.

[8] Rudolf Thurneysen, *Die irische Helden- und Königsage* (Halle, 1921), 33.

> "'Tis a true saying, my girl," said Ailill, " 'Well-off is the woman who is wife of a prosperous man.' "
>
> "Well-off indeed!" said the lady. "What makes you think that!"
>
> "That I think," said Ailill, "because you are better off today than the day I first met you."

Their "pillow-conversation" becomes at once impassioned. They vie with each other in wealth. Medb finds that, to surpass her husband, she must gain the Brown Bull of Cooley from Ulster. The chief events involve the defeat of her province by Cuchulainn, the invincible young hero of Ulster. The tragic result is the mutual destruction of two provinces. The ironic conclusion is that the Brown Bull himself dies in conflict:

> Then he turned his back to the hill, and his heart broke in his breast like the shattering of a nut-shell. Thus was his story and his fate, and so ends the Cattle Raid here.

This is, by comparison with most epics, a wild and primitive tale; and the Abbot of Terryglass felt constrained to add this caution in Latin in the *Book of Leinster*: ". . . I . . . place no credence in this story or fable, for in part it contains the deceptions of demons, in part the inventions of poetry, in part the appearance of truth and in part not, and in part delectation for fools."[9] But one suspects that the good Abbot relished this varied bill of fare, and so do most modern readers!

The other great narrative cycle of Ireland, which attained a widespread popularity in the twelfth century and was destined to outrival the Ulster cycle in later ages, concerned Finn mac Cumaill and his territorial army of *fíana* or fighting men. This cycle, like the *Cattle Raid*, dates back at least to the eighth century. By the twelfth century reputable poets, we are told by one of them, were expected to be able to recite 120 stories about the *fíana*.[10] The popularity of the theme is demonstrated by the evolution of the curious framework tale known

[9] *Die altirische Heldensage Táin Bó Cúalnge nach dem Buch von Leinster*, ed. Ernst Windisch (Leipzig, 1905), 3, 909, 911 respectively.

[10] Kuno Meyer, *Fianaighecht* (Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, 1910), xxix.

as the *Colloquy of the Ancients* composed at the end of the century. In this long prose tale, which occupies 224 pages in printed form, Cailte and Finn's son Oisin, the only surviving leaders of the *fíana*, meet St. Patrick and relate to his remarkably sympathetic ears many of the incidents in their past.

The delights of their unregenerate fighting days are at times strikingly emphasized by brief poems, such as Cailte's reply to Patrick's question, "Was he not good, the lord with whom you were, namely Finn mac Cumaill?" Cailte answers in a single quatrain:

If the brown leaf were gold
  Which the forest sheds,
If the shining waves were silver,
  Finn would have given them all away.

And the modern reader will be impressed by the occasional poems in the *Colloquy* descriptive of nature. An excellent example is found in Cailte's lyrical recollection of Finn's favourite hunting-ground, the island of Arran:

Filled with delights in fair season—
  Trout under banks of rivers;
Seagulls answering around white cliffs—
  Filled with delights at all times Arran.[11]

Not all the best narratives of the twelfth century, however, were derived from the legends of Cuchulainn and Finn. One particularly arresting work is the *Frenzy of Suibhne*. Based on the legend of a seventh-century Irish warrior, Suibhne mac Colmain, whose mind was unhinged by the horrors of battle, it revolves around the conflict between the pagan king Suibhne and the Christian abbot Ronan. Suibhne resents the encroachment of the church upon his territory and kills one of St. Ronan's psalmists with a spear. Ronan condemns him to pass his life as an exile in the wilds and to suffer death by the point of spear.

The ensuing narration has often been praised for the brilliance of the poems which it contains, particularly those nature poems descriptive of Suibhne's haunts in the wilds, but what really gives them their peculiar brilliance is the artistic unity of tone with which the narrator unfolds the nightmarish flight, the abandonment by his wife, and the penitent death of the demented Suibhne, whose sympathies remain so poignantly human through all his trials. In the narrative the poems thus take on a dramatic significance which lifts them quite out of the realm of the earlier Irish nature poems upon which they are patterned. Here, for instance, is a typical Irish nature-poem wrought with the delicacy of a miniaturist's art; the poet expresses in a single stanza the contrast between the rigours of his monastic life and the joys of nature:

---

[11] *Acallamh na Senórach*, ed. Whitley Stokes, in *Irische Texte*, IV, pt. 1 (Leipzig, 1900), 4, 11 respectively.

> Ah, blackbird, it is well with you
> In your nest among the bushes;
> You are a hermit that clangs no bell;
> Sweet, soft, and peaceful is your call.[12]

In the *Frenzy* a similar contrast between the harsh monastic bell and the blackbird's gentle song occurs to Suibhne when he recalls with wistful regret the days of his solitary life spent in the wilds before he lay dying in a monastery:

> There was once a time when I thought more sweet
> Than the sound of a little bell beside me
> A blackbird's warbling to the mountain
> And a stag's bellow in the storm.[13]

But here the author evolves a powerful and dramatic irony within a larger theme, which is developed throughout the work with conscious literary art.

Literary taste and skill, though of a very different order, also characterize the irreverent and hilarious satire entitled the *Vision of MacConglinne*. The plot is ancient folklore. Anier MacConglinne, a satirist and scholar, removes the demon of gluttony from King Cathal of Munster. The theme, however, is turned into a literary satire of monastic life and a parody of all the favourite motifs of Irish literature. Anier's vision is an account of an otherworld journey very different from that of Adamnan's or Brendan's, for his journey leads him over a lake of new milk to a house thatched with butter, and to a land of such tempting dainties that the demon of gluttony is at last lured out onto the lips of King Cathal to hear Anier's recital and is thus captured.

Much of the humour of the piece can still be appreciated by the reader today, though the non-specialist will miss the sharp point of some of its literary parody. When Anier succeeds in coaxing thirteen apples one by one away from the voracious king, for instance, the latter bursts into a hero's distortion, then into a hero's fury, such as are ascribed to Cuchulainn in the more primitive and less restrained versions of the heroic legends. The passage imitates both motifs almost literally and then concludes with a magnificent anticlimax.

---

[12] Kuno Meyer, *Bruchstücke der alteren Lyrik Irlands* (Berlin, 1919), 66.

[13] *Buile Suibhne: The Frenzy of Suibhne*, ed. J. G. O'Keeffe (London, Irish Texts Society, 1913), 152.

> Fury seized Cathal. One of his eyes jumped so far back into his head that a pet crane could not have picked it out. The other eye started out until it was as large in his head as the egg of a grouse.
>
> Then he pressed his back against the side of the palace, so that he left neither rafter, nor pole, nor wattle, nor wisp of thatch, nor post, that was not displaced.
>
> Then he sat down in his seat.[14]

And the parodist has gone even a step further than merely to transpose the heroic unaltered into the ludicrous. In one minute particular he has carefully changed the description of the sunken eye. In heroic legend it is a *wild* crane, of course, that cannot reach Cuchulainn's eye: here it is a ridiculous *pet* crane, reminiscent perhaps of a vindictive bird in the contemporary life of St. Ciaran which pecks out a miscreant's eye.[15]

The *Vision of MacConglinne*, in other words, reflects a culture which has reached a stage of sophistication such that it feels free to satirize its own achievements.

IV

So far we have examined only literature which is secular in tone, if not in origin. Of purely religious literature, the age seems to have been much less productive. One might mention, as a finished example of its kind, Maelmuire O'Gorman's *Martyrology* (*c.* 1166–74), which enumerates in strict metre a calendar of some 3,450 saints. But, though an undertaking of great industry and of considerable technical skill, it is a derivative work and certainly would not in itself suggest the presence of any renascent spirit in religious poetry.

The most characteristic expression of religious life in the twelfth century seems to be found in the numerous saints' lives written in either Latin or Irish. This was an ancient literary genre, always highly respected in Ireland; but the monasteries, faced with the threat of subordination to St. Malachy's diocesan bishops in the twelfth century, seem to have reacted by producing a flurry of newly composed and most tendentious lives, which differ greatly in attitude from those produced before the Viking invasions. In general the author, in celebrating the life of the saint, uses the biography as pious propaganda on behalf of the monastery of which this saint is said to have been the founder or patron. Not merely does he extol the merits of the saint's relics; but also, with an anxious eye toward rapacious kings and reforming bishops, he substantiates the origin of as many grants of land and of service, as many rights to tribute, and as many exemptions from dues as possible. Thus, to quote a trivial illustration, one biographer writing (*c.* 1122) at Lynn has the audacity to cite a story in his life of St. Colman mac Luachain, who had been dead for approximately 450 years, to support the tradition that the wife of the local monastic superior should on every Easter Monday prepare "a meal of drink and food for seven of the clerics of Lynn, and milk instead of ale, if there be no ale."[16]

---

[14] *Aislinge Meic Conglinne: The Vision of MacConglinne*, ed. Kuno Meyer (London, 1892), 51, 53. Cf. *Táin*, ed. Windisch, 371.

[15] *Lives*, ed. Stokes, 125 (see 409, n. 4186).

Since these propagandists inevitably lacked the inner compulsion supplied either by personal acquaintance with their subject or by reliable traditions such as had inspired the earlier Irish hagiographers, we have no right perhaps to look for any special literary excellence in their work.

At times the occasional passages of verse with which, in the characteristic Irish manner, the biographies are adorned achieve a quiet dignity and grace, as in the stanzas in praise of St. Colman's kindness to the colony of lepers in Lismore:

> Colman pure of hand, great his splendor,
> Hand against sin, esteemed by God in Heaven,
> Beloved by monks, longed for by lepers,
> Without a trace of malice in his soul.[17]

But it is usually possible to trace back the imagery of the poems to earlier and more original sources; and it is often equally easy to trace back the incidents recorded in the lives to earlier counterparts. Thus, in the *Life of St. Colman* we are told both in prose and in verse of a rather unedifying though economically profitable miracle wrought by the Saint, who opportunely transforms the King of Offaly into a stag and the wife of the King of Meath into a fawn just before they are caught together at a rendezvous by the lady's indignant husband. To the hagiographer, the moral of the story is that the grateful lover assigned a tribute from Offaly upon Colman and his successors at Lynn till the Day of Judgment. But to the literary historian the interesting feature of the whole incident is that the escape by transformation has obviously been imitated from an ancient and much more pious legend about St. Patrick, who escaped from the pagan High

---

[16] *Betha Colmáin maic Lúacháin*, ed. Kuno Meyer (Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, 1911), 28.

[17] *Ibid.*, 22.

King Loeguire by transforming himself into a deer and his disciple into a fawn.[18]

And in other lives the motifs may even be borrowed from secular sources, as, for instance, in the Irish *Life of St. Declan of Ardmore*, where descent is claimed for the saint from the son born of Clothra by an incestuous union with her three brothers. In the twelfth century, fashion almost compelled a hagiographer to adduce an impressive pedigree for his subject, but that he should invent an origin so unsuitable to a saint can only be explained by the contemporary popularity of a group of heroic legends in which Clothra plays an important role.[19]

Significantly, one of the most outstanding saints' lives, from a literary point of view, produced in the twelfth century is the Irish *Life of St. Cellach*, which is heavily indebted to secular models. In it the author portrays with great feeling the conflict of a monk who has deserted the cloister to become a chieftain but is cursed by an offended saint and is thus doomed to destruction.

On the day he is to be killed by his ruthless captor Maelcroin, he hails the rising sun as it illumines the psalter in his hand. In its dramatic power and arresting imagery the lyric is reminiscent of the *Frenzy of Suibhne*, to which the author may well have been indebted:

Hail to the morning fair
  That falls on the ground like flame,
Hail to the Being who sends
  The morning victorious, ever-new.

O morning fair, in your pride,
  Sister of the brilliant sun,
Hail, O morning fair,
  As you light my book for me. . . .

The speckled page of my book
  Shows me my life is awry.
Maelcroin I needs must fear;
  He will strike me down at last.[20]

V

The scattered examples of Irish literature here quoted will perhaps suffice to suggest that Ireland enjoyed a notable literary efflorescence in the twelfth century. Comparison with a country demonstrably affected by the European renaissance such as her neighbour England will also suggest, however, that the Irish efflorescence differs widely from the kind of renaissance which Haskins described.

---

[18] *Ibid.*, 86, 88, 90. See Motif D114.1 in T. P. Cross, *Motif-Index of Early Irish Literature* (Bloomington, Ind., 1952).

[19] See Kenney, *Sources*, 313.

[20] *Silva Gadelica*, ed. S. H. O'Grady (London, 1892), I, 56.

Nothing could better illustrate the difference between Ireland and England, for instance, than the fate of classical epic themes in the two countries. In the twelfth century the *Aeneid*, the *Pharsalia*, the *Thebaid*, and Dares Phrygius's Latin prose version of the tale of Troy were all turned into Irish. But notice what happened in the two countries.

A small sample will suffice to reveal the complete difference between the two literary cultures. Dares Phrygius had described the landing of the Greeks at Troy as follows:

> At the given signal, the ships set sail. The whole fleet proceeded, spread out, reached the shores of Troy. The Trojans resisted boldly. Protesilaus made an attack, put to flight, killed. Hector opposed him and killed him and terrified others. Then Hector retreated; there the Trojans began to flee.[21]

In England Joseph of Exeter incorporated this unadorned narrative into his ornate Latin epic, *De Bella Trojano*, written in six books in polished hexameters, decorated with a profusion of rhetorical figures, and amplified by borrowings of phrases and incidents from his wide reading in the classics. In fact, Joseph scarcely reveals that he is an Englishman, living in the twelfth century, except by his occasional contempt for the pagan deities. In his reworking, the passage quoted from Dares becomes:

> The Asturian guard of Trojan Minerva had seen the boats approaching, and hastening his uncertain way with rapid run, he calls "To Arms," and "To Arms" repeats. "How much longer, O men, will you stay still?" he asks. "Behold the enemy! I have seen the sea covered with ships, and now they hold the shore." The trusting populace raise their querulous voices, while children who pursue their mothers with tears and cry hasten forward, and vie with their groans, and sharpen the tumult.
>
> When Hector heard that Europa was afloat with all her keels, he was seized with a certain fear. At once, having composed his thoughts, he collects his spirit in bravery, and he chides himself that his bold manliness should have ventured upon flight and faltered, stricken by an alien fear. At once he seizes his arms, nor does he await for the army, but alone he turns the hinge, alone he rushes forth. The Phrygians likewise spring forth, and throng together, following from afar. The wall unclasps the city in savage outrush.[22]

The Irish translator, on the other hand, is so steeped in the traditional literature of his own country that he completely Hibernicizes Dares Phrygius. For the translator the *Destruction of Troy* (*Togail Troi*) is just another example of the literary genre embracing the topics of Destruction (*Togail*) and is for him thus akin to such familiar tales as that entitled the *Destruction of O'Derga's Hall* (*Togail Bruidne Ui Dergae*), for by this era the conventional narrative topics had all been classified under headings such as Destructions, Cattle Raids, Wooings, Visions, and the like.

---

[21] Dares Phrygius, *De Excidio Troiae Historia*, ed. F. Meister (Leipzig, 1873), 24.

[22] *De Bello Trojano*, bk. v, 116–132, in *Dictys Cretensis et Dares Phrygius*, ed. S. Artopoeus (London, 1825), II, 501–2.

The passage quoted from Dares reminds the Irish translator of the popular method in heroic legends of portraying an oncoming army, and he accordingly remodels Dares according to the style set by Redactor C already mentioned. Priam's look-out comes to the King and reports the invasion in a series of inflated passages too long to quote, apart from one brief illustration:

> It seemed to me as I looked that there appeared before me on the ocean a thick and heavy mist and a grey vapour dark and dim.

Priam asks him what this means; the look-out answers:

> Not hard to say. The thick grey cloud which I beheld over the sea was the breath of the heroes and champions of valour that filled the face of the ocean and the void between heaven and earth; for the steam and boiling of sharp-edged anger arose in the breasts of the valiant heroes, and they turned their anger to rivalry in rowing so that the air above them was filled with their breath.[23]

The whole scene echoes the chariot-driver's report to Ailill in the *Cattle Raid of Cooley* concerning the advance of the Ulstermen across the plains of Meath. He sees

> a great grey cloud which filled the vault between heaven and earth.

He tells Ailill its meaning:

> Not hard to say. The great grey cloud I saw which filled the vault between heaven and earth is the outpouring of breath of the horses and heroes, the soil of the ground and dust of the roads which the course of the wind raised over them, making a heavy dark grey mist in the clouds and air.[24]

Here we have, in the contrast between the Irish adaptor and the Anglo-Latin poet, an illuminating example of the great difference between the cultures of the two countries. In England the renaissance may be said, in part, to consist in an attempt to return to the achievements of the classical world and to transplant something of that classical tradition in the England of the twelfth century. In Ireland there is also a literary revival, but its aim is to revive and refurbish the native tradition and to amplify its resources by the assimilation of any alien materials that may prove to be amenable.

---

[23] *The Destruction of Troy*, ed. Whitley Stokes, in *Irische Texte*, II, pt. 1 (Leipzig, 1884), 28.

[24] *Táin*, ed. Windisch, 715, 717, 719.

England contained a complex mixture of cultures. Ireland was at the moment relatively homogeneous, having absorbed her Viking invaders and not as yet having been overwhelmed by the new flood of Anglo-Norman invaders. Perhaps, as a result, she was more resistant than England to foreign literary influences. Moreover, Ireland's tradition of Latin scholarship had been almost quenched in the days when the Vikings had driven such men as Sedulius Scottus and John Scottus Eriugena into exile on the Continent; now there were few writers in Ireland who could be said to belong to that international body of *literati* whose common language was Latin.

Some of the consequences of Ireland's peculiar circumstances are readily apparent. Ireland did not share in the philosophical revival typified by such men as John of Salisbury in England. One manuscript of this period contains Irish glosses and notes on the text of Chalcidius,[25] but its very rarity indicates the remoteness of Ireland from contemporary intellectual currents.

Despite the strong antiquarian spirit of the Irish, the native annalists did not attempt in the twelfth century to analyse the meaning of history, as did, for instance, the Anglo-Latin William of Malmesbury or the English author of the section of the *Peterborough Chronicles* written in the reign of Stephen.

The legends and tales of love native to Ireland did not succumb to the conventions of courtly love. Some of the finest narratives in the Irish tradition centre upon such tragic heroines as Deirdre and Grainne; indeed, it was those prototypes which probably provided the inspiration for the great story of Tristan and Iseult on the Continent. But in the twelfth century, the warm winds of Provence had not yet blown towards Ireland. The love-sufferings of the famous Irish *femmes fatales* remained too elemental to be bound by the conventions of *amour courtois*.

Finally, Irish literature does not produce that personal and autobiographical note so characteristic of an age in which man seems to have found a new interest in himself. Self-portraiture and self-concern akin to that of the English poets of the twelfth century do not appear in the works of the new school of bardic poets until early in the thirteenth century. Murrough O'Daly, for instance, solicits aid from a new Anglo-Norman patron (*c.* 1213) in these words:

---

[25] Kenney, *Sources*, 679.

Little, I suppose, do you know
  Who *I*, among Irishmen, am.
Respect to my verses you owe,
  For I am O'Daly of Meath![26]

A more suitable match for the supreme egotist of the twelfth century, Giraldus Cambrensis, it would be hard to find. Or one might quote examples of the personal note from the religious verse composed by Murrough's brother Donnough O'Daly, as when he confesses his neglect of God:

Artistry I have won from Him
  Though ill I have given Him thanks.
To forget Him by Whom it was given
  Will, I know, bring me ruin complete.[27]

That Ireland's literature should show signs of change in the thirteenth century is, of course, not surprising in view of the all-pervasive innovations wrought upon the Irish way of life by the coming of the Normans. But why Ireland in her comparative isolation during the twelfth century enjoyed a literary efflorescence is one of the many fascinating questions in Celtic literature demanding a fuller investigation.

[26] "Créd agaibh aoidhigh a gcéin," ed. Osborn Bergin, in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, XIII (1924), 241–6.

[27] "Gabham deachmhaidh an ndána," in *Dán Dé*, ed. L. M'Kenna (Dublin, n.d.), 46–51.

REVIEWS

THE HISTORIAN AS PROPHET*

FRANK H. UNDERHILL

"In order to understand the problems of the 'new society' in which we live today we shall have to go back at least as far as the French, the American and the Industrial revolutions. This assertion commits me to the historical approach to the contemporary world. Modern man is beyond all precedent 'history conscious.' What philosophy was to classical Greece and Rome, what theology was to the Middle Ages, what science was to the eighteenth century, that history is to our own time." This is the note on which Mr. E. H. Carr introduces his lectures, broadcast over the B.B.C., on *The New Society*. He has made himself our leading contemporary student of revolution, and has set forth the results of his studies and reflections in a series of volumes which have been coming from the press since the 1930's. They include biographies of Marx and Bakunin; *The Twenty Years Crisis 1919–1939* (1939); *International Relations between the Two World Wars* (1937 and 1947); *Conditions of Peace* (1942); *Britain* (1939), the first volume of a projected series on the belligerent countries edited by Mr. Carr, of which only his own volume apparently ever was published; *Nationalism and After* (1945) and *The Soviet Impact on the Western World* (1946); and *Studies in Revolution* (1950), a series of articles on the leading revolutionaries of the nineteenth century which first appeared in *The Times Literary Supplement*, of all places. And they have culminated in the three magisterial volumes of the 1950's which contain his history of the Russian revolution from 1917 to 1923, and which are presumably to be continued by further volumes.

The lectures on *The New Society* give us Mr. Carr's analysis of what he considers to be the essence of our twentieth-century revolution from individualism to collectivism, and his exposition of the function of the historian as an interpreter of events to his contemporaries. Mr. Carr here presents himself frankly as a social-democrat who has cast off most of the individualist inheritance of the nineteenth century and who believes that we must adjust ourselves to the fundamental twentieth-century phenomenon of mass-democracy with its shift of

---

**A History of Soviet Russia: The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923.* By EDWARD HALLETT CARR. Vols. I, II, III. London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd. [Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited]. 1950, 1952, 1953. Pp. x, 430; viii, 400; x, 614. $5.00; $6.50; $7.00.

The New Society. By EDWARD HALLETT CARR. London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd. [Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited]. 1951. Pp. viii, 119. $1.75.

emphasis from liberty to equality. He has no use for Toynbeean prophesies of doom or for Professor Butterfield's call for Christian judgment on our generation. "Grandiose pronouncements of the judgment of history on civilisations or nations sometimes provide evidence only of the bankruptcy of the groups from which they emanate." Mr. Carr is temperamentally an optimist, and at the end of his lectures he comes pretty close to the old doctrine of progress. But he is worried about the future prospects of reason in mass-democratic society, and seems today much more concerned about the task of preserving nineteenth-century liberal values than he used to be in the 1930's and 1940's. Everything that he has written displays his powers of brilliant, incisive analysis, his mastery of political ideas, and his delight in challenging the inherited ideology and prejudices of his English-speaking liberal readers.

It is interesting to reflect upon the differences between two famous professors of international politics in the University of Wales, A. E. Zimmern and E. H. Carr. One would look a long time to find two men in the same subject who differed from each other more than these two. Sir Alfred Zimmern always tended in his lectures and books to treat international affairs as if he were analysing a Socratic dialogue, as if international relations were a kind of intellectual discussion such as might take place in an Oxford senior common-room in which victory goes to the more acute and subtle debater. His *Greek Commonwealth* rather glossed over the bitter and violent struggles for power between rival classes and city-states in Greek society. Mr. Carr sees international politics always as a struggle for power, in which ideas are interesting or significant only as they contribute to the building-up of a power structure. Like Machiavelli he is fascinated by the techniques through which power is acquired, consolidated, and held, and by the functional institutions in which power is embodied. Like Machiavelli he tends to assume that success in achieving power provides its own moral justification. And this has created a gulf between him and most of his fellow English intellectuals, since we Anglo-Saxons prefer to avert our gaze from the harsher realities of power politics and to talk of power chiefly from the point of view of the higher moral purposes which it subserves. Mr. Carr's critics are fond of reminding him that for a moment in the 1930's he saw much more in Hitler than was proved ultimately to be there; and one critic has remarked that if he had lived in their times he would have missed seeing both Jesus and Socrates because they did not exercise the kind of power which attracts Mr. Carr's main attention. But the ultimate difference between Zimmern and Carr is obviously that

Zimmern was a survival from the liberal nineteenth century and that Carr is very much at home in the twentieth.

It is not generally with Machiavelli, however, that Mr. Carr is in the habit of comparing himself. He is always quoting and referring to Tocqueville. On the title page of his *Conditions of Peace*, written in the early days of World War II, is printed an extract from Tocqueville's *Souvenirs*: "Shall we attain a social transformation more complete and more profound than our fathers foresaw and desired, or than we ourselves are able to foresee? Or are we about to enter on intermittent anarchy—that chronic and incurable malady well known to ancient peoples?" The first lecture in *The New Society* has a quotation from *Democracy in America*: "The Christian nations of our age seem to me to present a most alarming spectacle; the impulse which is bearing them along is so strong that it cannot be stopped, but it is not yet so rapid that it cannot be guided. . . . A new science of politics is indispensable to a new world. This, however, is what we think of least; launched in the middle of a rapid stream, we obstinately fix our eyes on the ruins which may still be descried upon the shore we have left, while the current sweeps us along, and drives us backward toward the gulf." As Mr. Carr justly remarks, these words might serve as a motto to his own series of lectures, and he repeats them in his closing paragraph. He is trying to provide us with the materials for a new science of politics.

Tocqueville was an intellectual in the early part of the nineteenth century whose family associations, education, and religion made him a member of the *ancien régime*, but who knew that the old order had passed away irrevocably and who set himself to study the new order of democracy which he saw to be emerging on both sides of the Atlantic. In his book on the United States he announced that his real subject was democracy, not America. So also Mr. Carr, as a student in the first half of the twentieth century, has been powerfully impressed with the inescapable fact that the liberal democracy, the laissez-faire capitalist economics, and the nationalism of the nineteenth century no longer fit in with the conditions of the twentieth century. He has set himself to study the new collectivism and the new practices of "planning," and to investigate the conditions under which mass-democracy, as distinguished from the limited property-owners' democracy of the nineteenth century, may be made a successful form of society. In particular, since it is in Russia that contemporary collectivist tendencies have been carried furthest, he has set himself to study Russia, as Tocqueville studied America. He is not backward in pointing out that the hopes of the original Marxian revolutionaries have been falsified by the actual results of the revolution. It never occurs to us to accuse Tocqueville, because he studied America, of being a materialistic worshipper of success; and surely the time has come when such accusations against Mr. Carr should be dropped.

He is a disciple of Tocqueville in that he is trying to discern the direction in which modern history is moving and to provide his readers with some moral and intellectual guidance as they painfully adjust themselves to historical necessity. But he has repelled liberals because his intellectual analysis of the weaknesses of nineteenth-century liberalism in economics and politics has had too much of an emotional fervour about it. His scorn of liberal idealists and sentimentalists, and his demonstration of the bankruptcy of the nineteenth century, have been so sweeping as to remind one not so much of Tocqueville as of Mommsen celebrating the fall of Roman republicanism and preaching the inevitability of Caesarism. So his critics have been unwilling to believe in the genuine quality of his own professed liberalism and democracy. They have pointed out that this recent book on *The New Society* shows in its last sections a solicitude for liberal values which is quite inconsistent with Mr. Carr's contemptuous dismissal of liberalism in earlier volumes and even in the earlier sections of this same volume. But as far back as his book on *The Twenty Years Crisis*, even as he demolished Wilsonian idealism and showed that "collective security" was only a rationalization of the selfish interests of the powers who were satisfied with the status quo, Mr. Carr was already pointing out that neither "utopianism" nor "realism" by itself could provide a satisfactory political philosophy. Today he admits freely that Lenin, when he looked forward to the withering away of the state, was a utopian, though he takes care to add that Adam Smith when he praised free competition was also a utopian.

Mr. Carr's three volumes on the Bolshevik revolution down to the consolidation of the new régime in 1923 were completed in 1953. His aim in these volumes, as he explains, was "to write a history not of the events of the revolution but of the political, social and economic order which emerged out of it." Volume I dealt with the political and constitutional structure which culminated in the establishment of the U.S.S.R. in 1923; Volume II covered the economic history to the early days of NEP, and Volume III deals with foreign policy. The three themes are skilfully woven together, and the whole work can only be described as masterly. Among the most brilliant sections are a series of "Notes" analysing Lenin's theory of the state, the Bolshevik doctrine of self-determination, Marx and Engels on the peasant, and the Marxian attitude to war.

Several main points are emphasized in the third volume on foreign policy which are of special interest to us today. One is the contradiction in the attitude of all the original Soviet leaders between their conception of themselves on the one hand as a general staff preparing a universal revolution and on the other hand as the government of a geographical area which roughly coincided with that of the old Russian state. Mr. Carr shows brilliantly and repeatedly how Lenin and his companions shifted from one attitude to the other, never quite completely committing themselves to the one or quite abandoning the other. He makes another striking point in his demonstration of the process by which the Comintern became a highly centralized agency of the Russian national government rather than a federal association of various national communist parties. He is always clear on the fundamental weakness of the Russian revolution, in that it brought to power a proletariat who had no training in the democratic processes of government, into which the working classes of the West had been initiated during the nineteenth century, and who therefore had no capacity to prevent the development of authoritarian tendencies. He sees through all the paraphernalia of mass participation which so dazzled the Webbs when they studied the "new civilization."

But while this is a masterly historical work, it lacks certain things. It is a study only of the building-up of the power of the Soviet government; it has practically nothing about what happened to the ordinary Russian citizen during the revolution. It is about the wielders of power, not about the Russian people. Mr. Carr doesn't seem greatly interested either in the sufferings of the ordinary people or in the new opportunities which the revolution afforded them for a fuller life. That is, he doesn't seem much interested in the very topics which would naturally be of most interest to a liberal historian. Sometimes in his books he uses the word "tragedy" in describing the communal experience of the Russian people during these years, but he is so fascinated with the achievements of the leaders that he doesn't really convey the impression of tragedy. Nor does he indulge in the irony which would seem natural to the historian who contemplates the spectacle of masterful human actors achieving results quite different from those they intended to achieve.

One should not conclude even a brief review without remarking on the enlightenment which a puzzled reader of contemporary news despatches from post-Stalin Moscow can derive from this third volume on the foreign policy of the early years of the revolution. Mr. Carr is at his very best in describing the way in which the revolutionary leaders manoeuvred to detach Germany from the West. As he shows how they combined a policy of undermining all Western capitalist governments with one of favouring certain governments against others, the reader exclaims to himself time and again how up-to-date this all sounds in the middle of 1954. Whether one reads these volumes as austere history or as contemporary journalism they are a constant delight.

CONTENT WITH THE FORM*

NORTHROP FRYE

The Alexander Lectures given by Professor Crane in 1952 form one of the most significant volumes in a distinguished series. For here we have a reasoned statement, in manageable compass, of the doctrines which roused so much controversy when they appeared in *Critics and Criticism*, but without the polemical tone or the sense of the partisanship of a "school" which confused the response to that book. Mr. Crane here remarks that schools are a sign of competing dogmatisms rather than of co-operative learning, and it is impossible for any reader of this book to regard its author as an Aristotelian determinist out to do a hatchet job on the new critics.

The theme of the book is the contrast in method between two kinds of criticism. One approaches a poem to find "what actually was, for its poet, the primary intuition of form which enabled him to synthesize his materials into an ordered whole." This method is expounded in terms of Aristotle's *Poetics* in the second lecture, and in terms of its contemporary application in the fifth. The first, third, and fourth lectures are mainly devoted to the conceptual assumptions underlying certain more *a priori* approaches. Of these two are today of outstanding importance: the rhetorical and the mythological.

In the *Poetics* Aristotle divides the problems of criticism into a number of headings, of which "diction" (*lexis*) comes fairly well down in the list. When he reaches diction, he remarks that its theory belongs more properly to rhetoric or elocution. The implied distinction between poetics and rhetoric was blurred by later critics, Cicero, Horace, Quintilian, all of whom thought of poetry as a form of rhetoric, conditioned primarily by rhetorical problems of expression and presentation. Thus the poem appears, first, as a tissue of figures of

---

**The Languages of Criticism and the Structure of Poetry.* The Alexander Lectures, 1951–52. By R. S. CRANE. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 1953. Pp. xxii, 214. $5.50.

speech and tropical devices, and secondly, as a species of oratory concerned with effectiveness in the sense of audience response and moral value. This tradition has persisted from Alexandrian times down to the "new critics" of today, who are essentially rhetorical analysts.

The Aristotelian view is that poems are made objects: they are made out of words, it is true, but words are their material and not their form. The Aristotelian says that a poem *has* a verbal structure; the rhetorician says that it *is* one. Hence the latter is compelled to start, not with concrete poems, but with an abstract homogeneity called "poetry," which he has first of all to discriminate from other verbal structures. This leads him to define poetry in a tautological formula of the type: "poetry is some of what non-poetry isn't." Then he is forced to proceed deductively, along a second tautology of the type: "as the essential qualities of poetry are a, b, and c, the essentially poetic qualities of the poems x, y, and z can only be a′, b′, and c′." There is an alternative procedure of looking into poetry for what is analogous to other verbal structures. And as other, or non-poetic, verbal structures are mostly structures of meaning, rhetorical criticism runs into the first fact stated about rhetoric by Aristotle, that it is the *antistrophos* or answering chorus of dialectic. That is, the rhetorical critic sees in poetry an analogy of meaning, and feels that when he has extracted the meaning, however he conceives of meaning, he has isolated the real form of the poem. If the poem happens not to be particularly concerned with meaning, of course, all he gets is a dismal truism, like the *topoi* or commonplaces of medieval rhetoric.

The mythological critic proceeds in the same way, except that he takes poetry to be a symbolic rather than a verbal structure, and hence the analogies he seeks are those to dream, ritual, and myth. In fact all "schools" of criticism use much the same method: a deductive method which begins by asking: "What are we to look for in this poem?" and answers: "For examples illustrating the fact that all (good) poems contain the things that we have agreed to be essential to them, or particularly fascinating about them, on the basis of our definition of poetry." As the word "contain" shows, this method is interested solely in aspects of the poem's content or material. The disciple of Brooks or Richards or Empson who looks for irony, paradox, and ambiguity is blood brother to the Victorians who (to adopt a phrase of Mr. Douglas Bush) thought they were reading poetry when they were actually only looking for Great Thoughts. And while there is nothing wrong with reading poetry in order to build collections of metaphors or noble sentiments or archetypes or paradoxes, it would be a great impoverishment of the humanities if the inductive, pragmatic study of the whole poem, whose form is specific, peculiar to itself, unpredictable in advance, and revealed by nothing less than the whole poem, should drop out of the centre of criticism.

Mr. Crane speaks as though he were presenting a distinctive kind of criticism, recoverable from Aristotle, which has been submerged, practically since Aristotle's day, by the domination of rhetorical values. We are thus led to expect a fairly specific methodology in the last lecture; yet, on the other hand, we wonder how this can be consistent with his argument that all methodologies can find in poetry only what they have previously determined to look for. Much is claimed for his own method: it is even advertised with guarantees. "We can do all these things," he says, meaning the things other critics do; "but we can also do more, and as a consequence be able to do these things with greater precision and intelligibility. For we possess what these other methods have conspicuously lacked. . . ." But the principles, as well as the sparse examples from *Macbeth* and Gray's *Elegy*, remain very general in formulation. With the best will in the world it is difficult to see the practical application of, for instance, "the shaping principle of form and emotional 'power' without which no poem could come into existence as a beautiful and effective whole of a determinate kind," or "the assumption that the poet's end—the end which makes him a poet—is simply the perfecting of the poem as a beautiful or intrinsically excellent thing." (The word "simply," in this book, acts as a traffic sign indicating the approach of a junction with the Aristotle-Crane route.) As a method of teaching, we are told, it would be ("simply," again) "the communication to students of a comprehensive scheme of questions to be asked about all the different kinds of literary works they might be studying. . . ." These questions seem to be the same questions with which students are already reluctantly familiar from examination papers (e.g.: "What specific technical problems are involved in the composition of *Emma*, and how does Jane Austen go about solving them?"). Hence to follow Mr. Crane's method here one "simply" has to be a good teacher—one is reminded of the conferences that solve the plight of humanism by recommending that its professors should try to be a little brighter. And yet, how could it be otherwise? It would be absurd to expect Mr. Crane to come up with some patented new and easy formula.

The fact is, I think, that what Mr. Crane is expounding is the norm of critical procedure, and his method is an exhortation to the critic to keep his mind on his job. He is urging the central and primary importance of the unbiassed reading of the poem, and of the framing of critical hypotheses about it analogous, in what they stress and subordinate, to the actual proportions of the poem as a "concrete whole." He says, as clearly as his pythonic sentence structure will allow him to do, that the poem is its own object: that there is no end outside it, morality, truth, religion, or even beauty, to which it is finally to be related. In short, he is defining the aims and methods of the central practical activity of reading, studying, and evaluating poems which every sensible critic bases all his work on, whatever his special interests may be.

In revealing the conceptual barrenness, the circular arguing, and the errors of taste and perspective that result from neglecting this central activity, Mr. Crane has not only fully established his own point but performed a real service for all serious critics. I suspect, however, that the dialectic necessity of first defining an abstract "poetry," deducing *a priori* characteristics or values, and then making all poems the shadows of a Platonic Form, is in large part illusory—the illusion being not in Mr. Crane's mind but in the structures of what critics write. As I am included in the mythological group, I suppose my own methods are classed as deductive: actually they are inductive as far as my experience of them goes, generalizations shaped from a variety of individual contacts with literature. But I know that when I write them out they look as deductive as Euclid. Similarly, Mr. Crane usually examines the rhetorical critics when they are in a prefatory, harrumphing, what-after-all-do-we-really-mean-by-poetry mood which I think is generally expendable. The textual analysis that follows is their real contribution, and it is as often as not quite independent of such postulates. The main task of I. A. Richards' *Practical Criticism*, for instance, is surely to free inexperienced readers from exactly the kind of preconceptions that Mr. Crane condemns. And if the rhetorical critic tends to pass over plot-construction and "common sense apprehensions of his objects," he might retort that Mr. Crane's exposition of the *Poetics* also passes over the very emphatic statements in it about metaphor as the index of genius, the highest proof of the poet's mastery, and the one thing he cannot learn from others.

The real issue, then, is between criticism based on the central inductive operations of criticism, or what Mr. Blackmur calls "the enabling act of criticism," and criticism not so based, and consequently held captive by some kind of theory which is sure to be either tautological or tendentious. But this is a straight issue between relevant and irrelevant criticism. If Mr. Crane is unwilling to push the issue so far, that is partly because he has a special job in mind for his "abstract" critics to do. We have seen that the latter often treat poetry as though all of it were didactic: now some poetry is didactic, and for such poetry their methods may be appropriate. Mr. Crane believes that didactic poems, which for him include the *Commedia* and *The Faerie Queene*, are of "another order" from mimetic poems, and that his Aristotelian method can be applied only to the latter.

I can see a general distinction between fictional and thematic literature, but I cannot understand how Mr. Crane's way of putting the distinction can be a functional or even a consistent part of his argument. First, it seems to me to rest on an inadequate analysis of didactic poetry. Surely the thesis, or body of ideas, is at least as much material or content in Dante and Spenser as it is in Gray's *Elegy*, where the writing seems much more obviously and explicitly didactic than the writing in Yeats, who is classified as didactic. Second, if Mr. Crane says, "a good poem can thus be said to have wholeness both as a *mythos* and as a *logos*," he cannot very well go on to speak of "the most effective fitting of the *logos* as a whole to the *mythos*." Nowhere else in his book does he talk of fitting two whole things together; besides, the difference between a real *mythos* (plot) and a mere sequence of events lies in the inseparably "logical" quality of the *mythos* itself. So when Mr. Crane speaks of the "formal principle" of the *Ode to a Nightingale* as "a man in an evolving state of passion interpreted for him by his thought," and of this again as "something analogous to a plot," he is really saying that in this poem the *mythos* and the *logos* (or *dianoia*, as I should prefer to call it) are identical, yet he does not seem inclined to call the poem non-mimetic. Third, and most important, the quibbles involved in trying to apply the question "Is this poem mimetic or didactic?" would soon throw one back on a prior definition of "mimetic poetry," and so establish in Mr. Crane's method the very dialectical apparatus he is trying to avoid.

The main thing Mr. Crane does is to make a careful comparison of the poetic method of Aristotle with a modern method which sounds at first as though it were a monopoly of Mr. Crane and a few associates, but which, after all the qualifications are in, begins to sound more like the common practice or basic training of intelligent and candid critics everywhere. He does not rule out special critical interests, whether they are in archetypes or verbal texture or the history of ideas; all he rules out, in the long run, are quack formulas for discovering the secret of poetry or its "real meaning" in terms of something else. What he has done, then, if I am right, is to rehabilitate the common practice of criticism, dignify it with a tradition and a theory, and encourage it to feel strong enough to absorb instead of avoiding its more specialized and technical developments. And that is an essential task of enduring importance.

THE PROBLEMS OF EDUCATION*

A. W. Trueman

This book was inevitable. Sooner or later some member of some Canadian university faculty was bound to write it. After a brief summer interval of three months, graduates of the secondary schools are transferred to the university. It is natural and indeed necessary that the instructional staff of the university look over the in-coming class very carefully. Answers to the following questions will be sought: What do they know? What are they bringing with them, in training and attitude, which will enable them to profit by the disciplines of the university—we like to use the word *disciplines*—and which will enable the university to discharge effectively its functions of teaching and research?

In view of the controversy which has been developing about contemporary educational practice, it was only to be expected that some representative of our universities would write a book and call it "So Little for the Mind." That this book was written by a university professor, not by an "expert" in secondary education, accounts therefore for many of its emphases and for some of the expressed disillusionment with Canadian elementary and secondary education. Recruits are almost never up to standard. They do not know as much as their new instructors hope they will know. They do not display the eager desire for learning which would make teaching an unalloyed pleasure. They enter upon the fringe activities of their new life with a zest which argues a mistaken apprehension of the true purpose of attending a university. In short, they never are as good as it is supposed they used to be.

There can be no doubt, nevertheless, that a large proportion of our secondary school graduates enter university inadequately prepared. But this has always been the fact. What means, moreover, is there of proving that they are any more inadequately prepared than the entrants of 1900? Members of the present older generation, not the "experts" of whom Dr. Neatby writes so scathingly, and not "progressive" teachers, are inclined to think there is something in the university professors' indictment. But members of the present older generation, like the professors themselves, are really somewhat pre-

**So Little for the Mind.* By Hilda Neatby. Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Company Limited. 1953. Pp. x, 384. $3.00.

judiced witnesses. They will use, as all generations have used, the "when-I-was-a-boy-things-were-different" type of argument.

There seems to be no reason to despair of our elementary and secondary school products. They continue to do the work of the world acceptably. They enter upon the adult scene with no conspicuous inferiority to their grandfathers and grandmothers. Good books continue to be written and good newspapers continue to be published—not good Victorian or Edwardian books and papers, but good twentieth-century, post-war books and papers. Courage and idealism still exist among us. The supposedly degenerate and craven young men of Oxford who resolved in the famous Union debate not to die in defence of King and Country fought with their younger brothers the battle of Britain.

But however much we may encourage ourselves by reflections of this sort, we cannot ignore the present state of our elementary and secondary schools. We cannot ignore the many acute criticisms made by Dr. Neatby in a book which is timely and vigorous, and of which the main thesis is sound. The major adverse criticism of *So Little for the Mind* must surely be that the cumulative effect of the author's objurgations is to place in strong shadow the good work of the "progressives," even though she makes, in odd paragraphs here and there, graceful admission of its existence. We must honestly give credit to a movement which has humanized our schools, enthroned the children, with their individual differences, in the central position, made school life cheerful and interesting, and sought to relate in useful ways formal education and life itself. But we are provoked by contemporary developments to ask if the "progressives" are not busily engaged—to use that expressive British figure of speech—in throwing out the baby with the bath. We have got rid of much that was bad. Are we not discarding something that was and still is good?

The main task is not to determine whether the present generation is being more poorly prepared than previous generations. No one is likely to be able to answer that question satisfactorily anyway. But there are alarming indications that the continuation of present practice and theory may very well bring a day when such a distinction will clearly be made, to the disadvantage of future generations.

What we have to do is examine the steady drift of current educational practice. What are its tendencies and what is liable to be the outcome in general terms of these tendencies? Carl Van Doren in his book *Liberal Education* writes that "the hardest thing in education is to be profound and simple; to find a theory; to keep the ends of education distant, and its practice difficult." The evidence of Dr.

Neatby's book forces one to analyse the drift in educational practice somewhat as follows: we tend to make education less profound and more complex or if not more complex, more complicated; we have found a theory, creditable in its humanitarian concept, but still unsatisfactory, imperfectly realized, and hazily formulated, an instrument of some danger in the hands of inadequately trained and immature teachers, of whom we have a plentiful supply; we are losing sight of the fundamental ends of education, which are long-range or distant, by yielding to popular insistence that they be short-range or immediate; and, by general admission, the practice of this educational theory is beginning to make things rather too easy for the good pupils by failing to resist, in these days of mass education, the strong and not unnatural movement toward a levelling of the standards of intellectual discipline and achievement. We have to ask ourselves if the probable outcome of this tendency, if it is allowed to persist unchecked, may not be something like this (stated as pessimistically as one can state it): a generation of pupils—before very many years have gone by—who have been mistakenly spared the effort of reading great books and who consequently are not provided with sufficiently high standards against which to measure human thought, aspiration, and achievement; who will have been "socialized" out of respect for "sturdy individualism" into shallow-rooted deference to various forms of supposed community excellence; who will tend increasingly to measure the value of education by the immediate and practical returns which it brings; and who will not have discovered that every man must be a "self-made" man, schools being designed essentially to give assistance, to help the individual clear his path, and to lower the rate of human wastage, but not to relieve the individual of his responsibility for "making" himself. The tendency appears to be of this character but it is difficult to see that any great harm has yet been done to the nation by the tendency. Any action begets its opposite, and there are already signs of such reaction.

As Mr. K. W. Taylor, Deputy Minister of Finance, has pointed out, "it is of the nature of economic and political problems that they hardly ever admit of final solutions. Fresh investigations, further argument and reflection usually help to clarify issues and provide fuller understanding of the problem, but the new light also reveals new horizons as well as new difficulties and new obscurities. Problems in the social sciences also have the annoying quality of refusing to stay put: the nature of the problem tends to change while we are in the midst of studying it." All this may be said with equal pertinence of the problems of education, and precisely because economic, political, and social problems are of the nature described by Mr. Taylor. Education is inextricably tangled with these matters, and must therefore change, even as they do. And it will constantly be examined by the expert and the not-so-expert.

Even though we may believe in certain basic ends of all education—the acquisition of facts as the material of thought, the cultivation of the mind and its powers of discrimination, etc.—it seems clear that education should provide us with a product different in many ways from the desired product of the schools of 1854, or even of 1900. This must be so because the man of 1954 is called upon to live in a vastly different world from that of 1854, to behave in many different ways, and to cultivate vastly different attitudes and sensitivities. The well-read man of 1954 is not the well-read man of 1854, not merely because the poor fellow has an additional century of literary, historic, and scientific productivity to master, but because he must read with greater selectivity, and therefore with greater intelligence, for different purposes, and under different compulsions.

Modern educationists in their search for an appropriate theory and programme to cope with these conditions—and they are right to search—appear, however, to have cast their nets too wide, to have assumed for the schools social and community responsibilities that the schools cannot discharge, and in the process to have let the pupil begin an escape from some of the major responsibilities which he must be made to assume if he is to come out at the end with the factual information, the mastery of communication, and the disciplined and independent mind he needs. It scarcely need be said that although the pupil may learn more rapidly if he is interested in his work, no one ever became well educated without doing, over long periods of time, work in which he could not find the excitement of interest. This commonplace observation is worth making, however, in view of the tremendous emphasis which is now being placed on the importance at all costs of keeping the children interested.

The programme of studies and activities for elementary schools in its most extreme form, as reported by Dr. Neatby, is apparently based on the conviction that the school is responsible for health of mind and body; for the training of "balanced" individuals mindful of "their obligations to promote social and civic welfare"; for assisting pupils to develop "intelligent understanding of the problems, practices and institutions of social life"; for teaching, "*of course*," basic skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic; for giving an understanding of and power to cope with "life situations"; for developing interest in art, literature, music, nature, and play; for training in critical thinking and right habits of study; and for establishing the "habits, attitudes, and appreciations necessary for effective living in home and community."

There isn't much wrong with this implied conception of what people ought to be, or ought to strive to be. There isn't much wrong with the hope that as children pass through the schools and approach the age of eighteen or nineteen they may make progress towards these goals. But there is everything wrong with the view that all these desirable developments in the individual can be programmed, made the subject-matter of courses and individual lessons, and effectively taught—as one teaches the multiplication table—by using the right pedagogical method.

Consider these aims of the programme in relation to the elementary school-teachers we know or can recall. Consider the demands such a programme must make on the learning, wisdom, humanity, patience, and professional competence of the teacher. It is quite clear that more responsibility is being assumed by the school than the school can discharge; more is being asked of the teacher than the teacher can give. A major criticism of our schools is, therefore, not that the results fall so far short of the aims, but that the aims are impossibly unrealistic. The "of course" which precedes the prescription dealing with the teaching of basic skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic becomes, in effect, an "if possible."

The authors of this list ignored the responsibilities of home and community and huddled them all up inside the school. They do not believe that many of the goals they have set before the pupils can be reached only in the course of reaching the other goals, the more formal and traditional goals. To change our figure of speech, many of these virtues can be achieved only as a kind of by-product of the personality and character of the teacher, and of the general atmosphere of a well-run school. The self-conscious prosecution of activities, projects, or enterprises, for the purpose of "building" character, community interest, knowledge of the problems, practices, and institutions of social life, etc., is liable to be self-defeating. The modification of human beings in these specific ways is always a slow process which cannot be blue-printed; it cannot depend on courses, lessons, or specially designed activities. One would think that the bare fact of being in attendance with other pupils in a well-run school, and of being under the tuition of a competent teacher of humane disposition and reasonable professional zeal, would give the pupil what he needs to know about corporate living at the level of experience which is possible at his age.

Dr. Neatby has performed a genuine service by providing us with this analysis of our problem. She is perhaps a little ungenerous to the educational officials of our various provinces and a little blind to the achievements of the "progressives." But to this reviewer, she appears entirely right in her contentions that our schools should offer more for the mind, that our teachers should be much better prepared than they are now by general education and appropriate professional training to give it, that our entire programme in the elementary and secondary schools has suffered from domination by minds insufficiently trained in philosophy, history, and literature, and that the influence of the late Professor Dewey on all this has been a "Bad Thing."

MARLOWE AND SHAKESPEARE*

H. S. WILSON

The criticism of the literary output of Christopher Marlowe, as Professor F. P. Wilson remarks in the first of his Clark Lectures, is confronted by three major problems. The first is to determine the proper relation between Marlowe's writings and what is known about his brief but spectacular career as a rebel against the social and religious values of his day. The second arises from the faulty and often very corrupt state in which most of his plays have survived, for Marlowe did not enjoy the advantage even of such uncritical editing as the pious efforts of Shakespeare's fellows provided in the First Folio, and Marlowe's texts have come down to us in the haphazard states of abridgment and alteration at the hands of revisers and collaborators employed by the play-houses, varying all the way from the relative goodness of *Dido Queen of Carthage* (which was published as the joint work of Marlowe and Thomas Nashe) and the two parts of *Tamburlaine* (the only plays of Marlowe published in his lifetime) to the desperate corruption of *The Massacre at Paris*, which is the work of a reporter whose garbled recollection of Marlowe's play is eked out by confused memories of other plays. Professor Wilson holds that the last three acts of *The Jew of Malta* contain only a few speeches identifiable as Marlowe's; while even in the greatest of his plays, *Doctor Faustus*, we can be sure of Marlowe's hand only in the beginning and end. In such a state of affairs, it is apparent that the

---

**The Overreacher: A Study of Christopher Marlowe.* By HARRY LEVIN. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press [Toronto: S. J. Reginald Saunders and Company Limited]. 1952. Pp. xvi, 204. $5.50.

Marlowe and the Early Shakespeare. By F. P. WILSON. The Clark Lectures, Trinity College, Cambridge, 1951. Oxford, at the Clarendon Press [Toronto: Oxford University Press]. 1953. Pp. 150. $2.00.

third embarrassment is to make out any consistent line of development in Marlowe's artistic achievement. Yet the astonishing originality and power of Marlowe's contribution to the poetry and drama of his time remain undeniable and a perpetual challenge to critical interpretation, especially in their bearing upon the final problem of Marlowe's influence upon Shakespeare, who was in many ways Marlowe's immediate heir. In assessing these problems, Professor Levin's study provides much the more elaborate and thorough interpretation both of Marlowe's literary work and of his relation to Shakespeare—as well as to others of his contemporaries and successors—while Professor Wilson's lectures, much briefer in scope, contain chiefly some valuable cautionary suggestions for Marlowe criticism and a delimitation of the respective merits and achievements in drama and poetry of Marlowe and the early Shakespeare.

The known facts of Marlowe's career, his violent and untimely end, and the testimonies of his contemporaries make it clear, apart from any of the evidences of his writings, that the young Christopher Marlowe was a scoffer at all the orthodoxies of his day. In the testimonies of Thomas Kyd and Richard Baines, he stands accused of favouring atheism and pederasty; while his avoidance of holy orders, for which his university career at Cambridge had destined him, his employment in the secret service of Secretary Walsingham in the company of various unsavoury associates, the charges that he would jest at the Scriptures and blaspheme against the character of Christ, that he was intemperate, of a cruel heart, and rash in attempting privy injuries to men; the confirmation of this in the record of his involvement in a duel in 1589 and the final scene of his death at Deptford in 1593, in a brawl over a tavern reckoning where Marlowe was apparently the aggressor—all these evidences, too widespread and mutually corroborative to be much discounted, have led many commentators to read the plays in the light of Marlowe's personal record and to see him as choosing his literary subjects as an expression of his own violent and rebellious temper: of surging ambition in the figures of Tamburlaine and the Guise in *The Massacre at Paris*; of what the Elizabethans thought of as Machiavellian policy in *The Jew of Malta*; of sensuous indulgence in *Hero and Leander* and *Edward II*; of the passionate pursuit of knowledge as an end in itself in *Doctor Faustus*.

These themes Professor Levin has conveniently epitomized in a scheme he takes from Pascal: "In the stricter categories of theology [Marlowe's] Epicureanism might have been *libido sentiendi*, the appetite for sensation; his Machiavellianism might have been *libido domi-*

nandi, the will to power; and his Atheism *libido sciendi*, the zeal for knowledge. Singly and in combination he dramatized these ideas—these 'highest reaches of a humaine wit'—pushing them to limits beyond which no writer had gone. . . ." As an inclusive symbol of this aspiring spirit, Professor Levin chooses as his title the figure named, in George Puttenham's *Arte of English Poesie*, "the Ouer reacher"—that is, hyperbole—"it could not have been more happily inspired to throw illumination upon Marlowe—upon his style, which is so emphatically himself, and on his protagonists, overreachers all." On the title-page is reproduced the cut of the fall of Icarus from Geoffrey Whitney's *A Choice of Emblems*. Thus Marlowe's career and his literary achievement is summed up for us, graphically, symbolically, theologically, and with a rare and illuminating critical insight in the chapters of detailed comment, suggestively titled "The End of Scholarism" (which is mainly an analysis of Marlowe's style, with particular reference to the two chief influences upon it, Ovid and Lucan); "The Progress of Pomp" (a study of the two parts of *Tamburlaine*); "More of the Serpent" (*The Jew of Malta*); "State Overturned" (*Edward II*); "Science without Conscience" (*Doctor Faustus*); "The Dead Shepherd" (Marlowe's influence). There is also a series of useful appendices, serving to document the argument throughout the book.

Professor F. P. Wilson warns against the extreme tendency to regard Marlowe as a highly subjective writer whose plays were intended simply as the vehicles of covert jibes at the orthodoxies of his age. He does well to remind us that the reading of private allusions into Marlowe's plays does injury to Marlowe's dramatic gifts and that a poet like Marlowe "may yet be the disinterested artist losing his identity in the stuff which he is turning into art"; that the implied criticisms of Christians and Christianity in *Tamburlaine* and *The Jew of Malta*, for instance, are implicit in the subject-matter of the plays and relevant primarily to their dramatic contexts. Still, the impression remains of a dominant theme in each of the plays that is far from any Elizabethan orthodoxy, and of an implicit bias in a great artist and lover of beauty who, in Professor Wilson's own words, was "more devoted to ideas than to people, and insatiably curious; not suffering fools gladly, indeed exasperated beyond bearing by dullness and hypocrisy; a shoemaker's son with no tincture in his nature of the gentle craft; finding in human nature in general as much of the knave as the fool; no atheist, but a deist before we had borrowed the word from the French; at once repelled by dogma and fascinated by it, and better read in divinity than any other Elizabethan dramatist." The supporting evidence for such a view will be found chiefly in Professor Levin's study, which persuasively shows that the best clues for the interpretation of Marlowe's plays and poems are to be found in what we know of the author's life.

Both of these studies give support to the view recently advanced that Shakespeare was the pioneer in the development of the chronicle history play upon the Elizabethan stage. Lacking any adequate external evidence for deciding the priority between Shakespeare's plays of the reign of Henry VI and Marlowe's *Edward II*, commentators have been obliged to argue from resemblances between them. The most cogent argument for the precedence of *2* and *3 Henry VI* (advanced by A. P. Rossiter) is that of three passages in these plays which resemble passages in *Edward II*, all three are found in the chronicles for the reigns of Henry VI and Edward IV consulted by Shakespeare, whereas no such passages which might have suggested the lines to Marlowe occur in the chronicles of the reign of Edward II. Professor Wilson points out that apart from the academic *Richardus Tertius* (1579) which did not have to pass the censor's eye, and the very crude popular play of *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, there is no evidence that the chronicle play flourished on the English stage before the victory over the Spanish Armada; and he concludes that *2* and *3 Henry VI* have a better title than any play of the University Wits to have led the way and established the vogue after 1588. Professor Levin, arguing from the characteristic bent of Marlowe's dramaturgy, notes that in *Edward II*, as in his other plays, Marlowe is concerned with the individual rather than the state; he has no interest in the ethical and political values delineated as the central design of Shakespeare's histories or in the struggles of a people and the emergence of a national destiny: "his unique contribution was to bring the chronicle within the perspective of tragedy, to adapt the most public of forms to the most private of emotions." And thus, we may conclude, it was Shakespeare more than any other who gave substance and scope to that long line of dramatic chronicles which, as Thomas Heywood boasted in 1612, had represented the whole of English history upon the English stage from the landing of Brut down to the day of his writing; and the legend of the young Shakespeare who began his dramatic career as an absolute *Johannes factotum* and botcher of other men's plays may be allowed at length to lapse.

DEFENDING PLATO*

F. E. SPARSHOTT

A man twenty-three centuries in his grave might seem beyond the reach of attack, or the need of defence. But Plato remains stubbornly a contemporary. In the last twenty years a series of violent attacks upon his political opinions and his personal character, notably by Professors W. Fite and K. Popper, has been so successful that it is now generally believed in intellectual circles that Plato was the father of fascism, and that to study his works is to be a traitor to democracy.

Since these attacks take their rise in misinterpretation, misquotation, mistranslation, and neglect of evidence, it is not hard to refute them. It is largely a matter of confronting the accusations with the evidence upon which they purport to be, or ought to be, founded. This tedious task Professor Levinson has exhaustively and conclusively performed in a huge book, much of which is in fine print as footnote or appendix. His task is made harder by the fact that on those issues where Plato's thought departs from an ill-defined "liberalism" it is assumed without question that Plato has no chance at all of being right, and that one can at best find excuses to palliate his offence. This makes the book seem impartial, and hence no doubt more effective as defence; but it also makes it dull. No light whatever is cast upon the problems which Plato discusses.

In its sole aim of refutation, the book succeeds. No one who studies it can believe that Plato's opponents have written with due care, or even in good faith. Yet it may fail of its effect. As the author admits, it is too long to read; we may add that it is too dear to buy. It can be used only for reference—a purpose for which it is well suited, since it has two excellent indexes, a full system of cross-references, and an enormous bibliography. But no one studious enough to use it will have been taken in by Professors Popper and Fite in the first place.

In one part of his defence, Professor Levinson is plainly embarrassed. One at least of his opponents rejects Plato's statement of his opinions and claims to read "between the lines" the secrets of his black heart. When one's opponent thus acknowledges that his statements go against the only available evidence, one can hardly refute him; one can only ask how he came to be that way. Professor Levinson attempts an answer in terms of Viennese politics whose validity one may doubt and whose necessity one must deplore. But necessary it seems to be; for it is just this kind of attack which, for reasons wholly discreditable to human nature, has proved most effective.

---

*_In Defense of Plato_. By RONALD B. LEVINSON. Cambridge: Harvard University Press [Toronto: S. J. Reginald Saunders and Company Limited]. 1953. Pp. xii, 674. $13.00.

To discuss Plato's personal morality is a waste of time: the worth of an argument does not depend on the worth of the arguer. The effect of all this attacking and defending is to distract attention from the reasoning with which Plato supports his views, and to emphasize the immediate emotional reaction to them. But those of us who study Plato use his works as a basis for argument, not as dogma. To counter argument with abuse or misinterpretation is not to defend one's opinion, but to admit that no defence is possible. If democracy can be defended by reasoning, if Plato's arguments can be matched by better, the enemies of Plato are no true friends of the institutions in which they claim to believe.

The book under review is an excellent antidote, but one from which none but the poisoned can expect to benefit.

THE POETIC PROCESS*

MILLAR MACLURE

"A poem," says Professor Whalley, "is not first conceived and then expressed; a poem in the making discovers itself to the poet." This is that kind of oracular statement the truth of which depends on how one chooses to interpret it. Anyone who has ever written anything (even a review) will find it axiomatic in one sense, that no composition really exists until it is in process of becoming, that there is no blueprint for what is really *made*. So far as Professor Whalley reiterates this and related facts, supports them by elaborate quotation, and illuminates them by careful analysis, we may be grateful for his book. His distinction between the contemplative and the technical ways of mind, his definition of the artistic process as "at once an act of discovery and self-discovery . . . an act of self-realization which at the same time makes the world more real" (p. 11), these are valuable ideas, the more so for being set forth with real feeling. In effect, he claims that poetry is a discovery of reality, not in terms of abstract relations but in terms of value; that it is neither self-expression nor impersonal diagram, but a prelogical revelation of the integral relationship between man the creator and "creation." This doctrine, elaborated in terms of the imagination, of symbolic language, of metaphor and myth, of music and rhythm, forms the basis of a quite impressive argument.

Yet this existential theory of poetic creation seems to me at once narrow and pretentious. What are we to think of a philosopher-critic who, while affirming the unity of the arts, virtually excludes, by omis-

---

**Poetic Process.* By GEORGE WHALLEY. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. [Toronto: British Book Service (Canada) Ltd.]. 1953. Pp. xl, 256. $4.25.

sion or negation, the epic and dramatic forms in favour of the lyric, and who assumes the priority of suffering over craftsmanship in the artist? Considered in this light, each work of art is a unique irreducible psychological event, "a poem is a poem is a poem" (p. 225), and criticism is inevitably reduced to something very like an act of contrition. And even if we agree to disagree on these points, it is hard not to boggle at the claims Professor Whalley makes for art when he asserts that "only in art can eternal truth ever be expressed" (p. xxxi) or that "art claims to engage the whole person and to make the person whole" (p. 10); when he quotes with approval Herbert Read's analogy between the quality of poetry and a state of grace (p. 13), and concludes that only poetry can " 'body forth' reality and Being" (p. 224). One does not have to be either philistine or puritan to complain of this aesthetic deism.

But the texture of this book is so dense that it is perhaps damaged by citation of proof texts, and besides Professor Whalley is under no obligation to convince me or anyone else. He says in his preface that an inquiry of this kind "marvellously sharpens the wits" of its author; I will add for him that it should do the same for his readers.

BOOKS RECEIVED

Caponigri, A. Robert. *Time and Idea: The Theory of History in Giambattista Vico.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd. [Toronto: British Book Service (Canada) Ltd.]. 1953. Pp. viii, 226. $4.00.

Curti, Merle, ed. *American Scholarship in the Twentieth Century.* With essays by Merle Curti, Louis Wirth, W. Stull Holt, René Wellek, Walter R. Agard, Arthur E. Murphy. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press [Toronto: S. J. Reginald Saunders and Company Limited]. 1953. Pp. xii, 252. $5.85.

Dorwart, Reinhold August. *The Administrative Reforms of Frederick William I of Prussia.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press [Toronto: S. J. Reginald Saunders and Company Limited]. 1953. Pp. xx, 250. $5.25.

Fairbank, John King. *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast: The Opening of the Treaty Ports 1842–1854.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press [Toronto: S. J. Reginald Saunders and Company Limited]. 1953. Pp. xiv, 494. $9.75.

Hamelin, O. *La Théorie de l'intellect: d'après Aristote et ses commentateurs.* With Introduction by Edmond Barbotin. Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin. 1953. Pp. 98.

Hoover, Benjamin Beard. *Samuel Johnson's Parliamentary Reporting: Debates in the Senate of Lilliput.* California: University of California Press. 1953–54. Pp. xii, 228. Cloth $2.50, paper $1.75.

Hutchison, John A. ed. *Christian Faith and Social Action.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons [Toronto: S. J. Reginald Saunders and Company Limited]. 1953. Pp. x, 246. $4.25.

Watkins, Frederick, trans. and ed. *Rousseau: Political Writings.* Containing *The Social Contract, Considerations on the Government of Poland,* and Part I of the *Constitutional Project for Corsica.* Edinburgh and Toronto: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd. 1953. Pp. xlii, 330. 10/6.

Wiley, Paul L. *Conrad's Measure of Man.* Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press. 1953. Pp. vi, 228. $3.85.

ric,
the
ible
and
con-
not
as-
xi)
rson
ad's
13),
ng"
om-

ged
no
that
hor;

ttista
Book

ssays
LTER
rsity
953.

lliam
S. J.

ning
Press
xiv,

eurs.
nique

bates
3–54.

arles
ted].

ining
Part
omas

Wis-

This fall from two University Presses

from Toronto

ARBITER OF ELEGANCE, by Gilbert Bagnani. A work of scholarly significance, yet written "fundamentally for fun", probing the "feebleness and circularity" of the arguments which support the prevailing view of date and authorship of the *Satiricon*, and asking, when was it written? by whom? why? and, perhaps most important, what was the author like? $2.75

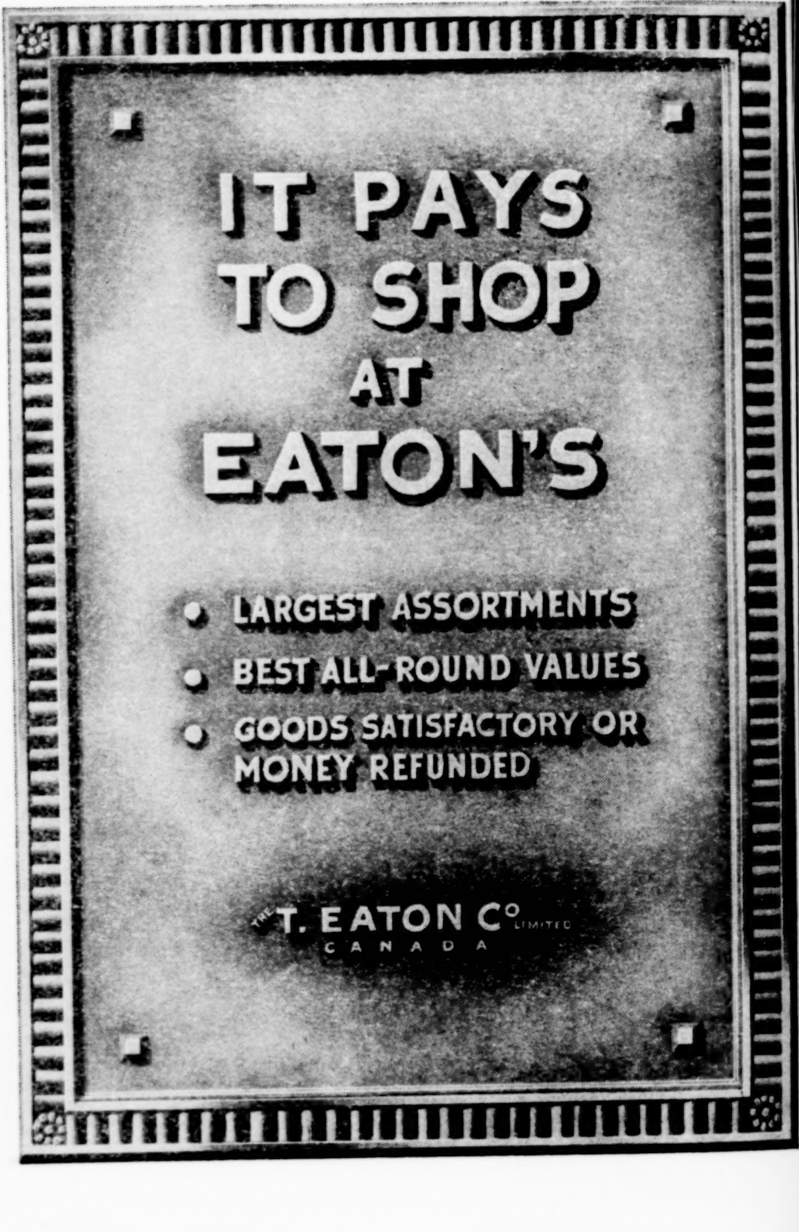
SIR EDMUND HEAD: A SCHOLARY GOVERNOR, by D. G. G. Kerr. A lively and convincing biography of a linguistic scholar and man of letters who was also one of Britain's most capable colonial adminstrators during the anxious days prior to Confederation. This is the first full-scale treatment to recognize and assess the vital significance of Head in Canada's history, from evidence in public documents and personal correspondence. $5.00

from Chicago

HUMANISM AND THE SOCIAL ORDER IN TUDOR ENGLAND, by Fritz Caspari. Through highly original analyses of the social and educational ideas of the Tudor humanists—Erasmus, More, Elyot, Starkey, Sidney, Spenser—Caspari shows how their theories were affected by the historical situation and had, in turn, their own direct and decisive effect on the shape of sixteenth century English society. $6.50

THE LITURGICAL RENAISSANCE IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, by Ernest B. Koenker. The liturgical movement is regarded by many as the most significant force today in the Roman Catholic Church and its influence has expanded to touch every branch of the arts as well. Seen as an expression of a great spiritual renewal and a return to early patterns of worship. $5.00

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO PRESS



IT PAYS
TO SHOP
AT
EATON'S

- LARGEST ASSORTMENTS
- BEST ALL-ROUND VALUES
- GOODS SATISFACTORY OR MONEY REFUNDED

THE T. EATON C^O LIMITED
CANADA